

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@triblagroup.com

16 July 2013

Valerie Lucas
Headteacher
Wootton-by-Woodstock Primary School
Church Street
Wootton
Woodstock
OX20 1DH

Dear Miss Lucas

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wootton-by-Woodstock Primary School

Following my visit to your school on the 15 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection in February 2013.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and your mathematics subject leader. We walked around each class and observed pupils working. I met with a representative from the local authority and with two governors. I evaluated your school improvement plan and the most recent data that you hold about pupils' achievements.

Context

Pupils are currently taught in portable classrooms while emergency maintenance takes place on the school building. The school office and your office are still based on the school site. The portable classrooms are a short walk away.

Main findings

It is clear that the school has gone through a considerable period of turbulence with long term staff absences and unexpected issues with the school building. You have recognised where standards have slipped and demonstrate a determination to improve so the school is once again providing a good education for all pupils. The local authority has faith in your leadership. They talk convincingly about the success you have had as a leader and the work you do to support other schools. They are providing additional support and challenge to make sure that improvement happens quickly enough in this school.

You have produced a plan which rightly focuses on improving teaching and leadership, particularly in mathematics. I know that you have wrestled with the reasons why some pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of in mathematics because these pupils do not fit into an obvious pattern or group. You have sensibly brought in experts to work alongside teachers and your mathematics leader to explore this issue further. We spent some time looking at mathematics in one class and identified some areas for improvement. I intend to review mathematics teaching more carefully across the whole school to identify potential reasons why the progress of some pupils stalls, particularly in Key Stage 2. I plan to do this at my next visit.

It is sensible that you are sending both your mathematics subject leader and Key Stage 2 teacher for professional development in mathematics. The work that you have done so far to develop the use of questions to help pupils think more deeply is paying off. It is important that all teaching assistants use the same high quality questioning to help pupils think more deeply about new learning. In one class, the teaching assistant was helping pupils so much that they did not need to do enough thinking for themselves. Some pupils in this group got the right answers without understanding the concept they were studying. I know that you have planned some training to cover this issue further.

Your plans are clear about what you expect to see happening in lessons and in our discussions, you were clear about the reason for these actions. Your planning shows what techniques you expect teachers to be developing each week, but not the difference that you expect these to be making. You need to be clear about how you will evaluate the impact of the changes you intend to make. It is also important that you allow teachers to make informed decisions about the best way to use these techniques in lessons so all pupils make good progress. It will be useful to identify milestones that you and governors can use to test the impact of your actions at regular points over the next 16 months.

Governors are clear about the work that needs to be done. They know the school well and talk convincingly about the plans to move forward. It is evident that you talk with the governors regularly and that they provide you with challenge and

support. The new tracking system is proving useful in helping governors understand how the school is moving forward, although there are some major anomalies between test results and teacher assessments and this needs to be rectified so this data is as useful as it can be. I know that you are concerned that teacher assessments may not be accurate.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure teachers understand the intended impact and purpose behind the classroom techniques you are developing
- ensure clear milestones are set to so you can regularly evaluate how the school is moving towards being good
- ensure all teacher assessments are accurate.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Oxfordshire.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector