

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5359  
**Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

12 September 2013

Gillian Morris  
Headteacher  
Charmouth Primary School  
Lower Sea Lane  
Charmouth  
Bridport  
Dorset  
DT6 6LR

Dear Mrs Morris

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Charmouth Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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.

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

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen both the school and the governors' action plans so that actions taken to improve the school are measured against clearly defined success criteria
- ensure staff and governors are familiar with the findings of Ofsted survey reports such as, *Getting to Good: How headteachers achieve success*, *School Governance – learning from the best* and how they can be used to support the schools work in improving teaching and raising standards.

- pursue links with schools where the quality of teaching is consistently good and outstanding so that teaching at Charmouth may be improved rapidly by learning from direct observations
- ensure that the local authority 'tapered support' plan and protocol are clear and understood by all parties.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, pupils, representatives of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans were evaluated and a scrutiny of marking and assessment was undertaken during brief visits to all classrooms.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection one teacher has left and the substantive deputy Headteacher, currently on extended leave, has been replaced with a new acting deputy Headteacher. Two teaching assistants have also left. The number on roll has also declined. This is a combination of natural demographics and parents withdrawing their children having lost confidence in the school following the inspection.

## **Main findings**

The determination to improve, driven by the senior leaders and governors, is clearly evident in the school and underpinned by clear plans. Both the school and the governors' action plan are fit for purpose and address all the key issues of the last inspection. However, both plans require greater precision in setting out how actions will be measured for their success.

Senior leaders have set out more precisely what is expected of teachers to secure a more consistent approach to lesson planning so that pupils' needs are more precisely met. The work that the pupils are set is better tailored to their ability levels. There is an appropriate degree of consistency in how classrooms are presented to promote and support learning and a common marking policy, incrementally more sophisticated as the children get older, is evident in workbooks. The pupils know their personal targets in English and mathematics. They are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The pupils are fully aware of the step change the school has taken to improve the way their work is marked.

A full curriculum review has been undertaken which now secures coverage of the national curriculum subjects. The school has taken a sensible approach blending thematic topics with discrete subject teaching. This avoids contrivance and appeals

to the interests of the pupils. The school has focused appropriately on securing opportunities for extended writing within the plans.

A settled leadership team has been established since the start of this academic year. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and there is a clear sense of common purpose amongst the staff team. However, while the conditions for improvement are in place, there is still some way to go before the quality of teaching is consistently good and better in the school or that action taken to date is having demonstrable impact on raising standards.

Governors are playing their part in driving improvement. They are more active in monitoring the progress of action taken and are now better placed to hold the school to account. They have a better awareness of strengths and weaknesses, for example in acknowledging the need to improve the quality of teaching to consistently good. Attendance at staff meetings and professional development opportunities when the school introduced a new commercial resource to help improve English means they are taking a more visibly active role in school improvement. Governors' understanding of pupil performance data is improving although not fully secure.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The monitoring procedures of the local authority were not robust or timely enough to intervene in the decline in the school's performance from its previously outstanding inspection judgement. When judged to require improvement at the last inspection in May 2013, the local authority support for addressing staffing issues, improving teaching in English and mathematics and support for senior leadership was focussed and appropriate. The school has drawn well on this support and that provided by another Headteacher. However, the school lacks a clear understanding of the local authority's 'tapered support' plan and protocol. The evaluation, and accountability framework of all parties involved in driving improvement is not sufficiently transparent. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

Yours sincerely

Kevin Jane

**Senior, Her Majesty's Inspector**