

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

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Mrs Helen Williams
Headteacher
St Nicholas and St Laurence Church of England Primary School
Broadway
Weymouth
Dorset
DT3 5DQ

Dear Mrs Williams

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Nicholas and St Laurence Church of England Primary School, Broadway

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 June 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:

- ensure that pupils know and understand the next steps to take in their in their learning by setting individual targets in English and mathematics
- ensure that pupils have frequent opportunities to respond to written feedback so that they understand clearly how to improve their work
- establish a programme of visits by governors to check how well the school is tackling the most important weaknesses
- improve the school's action plan by setting interim objectives and extending the current criteria for measuring success.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, members of the senior leadership team, governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I met with a group of pupils to talk about their recent experiences of school. Together, we visited lessons briefly to scrutinise marking and assessment. I evaluated the school's action plan and examined data on pupils' achievement and their attendance.

Context

Since the last inspection, the deputy headteacher has left the school following a period of absence. The responsibilities of the deputy headteacher role have been reallocated internally. One teacher has joined the school part-time on a fixed term contract.

Main findings

Senior leaders are tackling the school's most important weaknesses with ambition and resolve. You have now set a minimum standard for pupils to attain in each year group and expect pupils to make greater progress in Key Stage 1. The responsibility for the school's improvement is shared more widely between members of the senior leadership team. The pace of improvement has quickened because subject leaders have more time to fulfil their roles. The mathematics leader has met with individual teachers to discuss the progress that pupils are making and to ensure that lessons build on what pupils achieved last year. As a result, pupils that need to catch up are getting support earlier in the year than has previously been the case. Similarly, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, supported by the local authority, has ensured that tasks in Year 1 build more carefully on what children are able to do when they leave the Reception class.

A scrutiny of pupils' written work in mathematics shows a more consistent approach towards marking. Most pupils are able to explain confidently that the colour-coded marking, 'Shows what you need to improve.' However, pupils do not always know how to improve their work because they are not always given the opportunity or enough guidance to respond to the feedback. Teachers have set targets for pupils' future learning in English and mathematics, but these are not used by pupils during lessons. Consequently, they do not understand clearly enough the next steps they should take to raise their attainment.

The school's higher expectations and greater rigour are evident in the improvements in pupils' behaviour and their attendance. On average, pupils in Year 6 made better than expected progress last year and the proportions of those that attained the

higher level 5 in the national tests increased. However, their attainment and progress fell below the government's minimum standards due to a legacy of weaker in teaching.

Following the inspection report, the governing body has acted quickly to audit the skills of individual governors and commission an external review of its work. As a result, governors now have a better understanding of their responsibilities and have set out a several actions to improve governance. A policy for governors to visit the school has been developed, but a clear programme of visits is yet to be implemented. The governing body is making leaders more accountable by setting out the information it requires and making important information about the school's work more accessible to individual governors.

The schools' action plan is fit for purpose and addresses all the key issues of the last inspection systematically. However, the plan lacks interim objectives and does not take account of a wide range of evidence to measure success. This makes it difficult for leaders to gauge the progress being made on tackling each priority for improvement.

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 local authority rightly identified that the school needed additional support before the last inspection. Consequently, the senior improvement adviser has lost no time in helping you draw up a robust plan for improvement. Subject and phase leaders know their responsibilities as a result of support from a local headteacher. Training provided by the local authority has given them a better understanding of how the school's performance compares with national averages. The school should make further links with schools where the quality of teaching is consistently good and outstanding.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector