

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

17 October 2013

Ms Sonia Phillips  
Headteacher  
West Kingsdown CofE VC Primary School  
Fawkham Road  
West Kingsdown  
Sevenoaks  
Kent  
TN15 6JP

Dear Ms Phillips

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of West Kingsdown CofE VC Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 16 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I met with you, other leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I also had a telephone discussion with the Director of Education from the Diocese of Rochester. Two pupils took me on a tour of the school at lunchtime. You also provided documents such as information about pupils' achievement, monitoring records, recent governing body minutes, and an account of actions taken since the inspection. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

## **Context**

There has been a changeover of staff and two teachers joined the school at the start of this term. Mathematics and literacy subject leaders have recently taken on these responsibilities. A new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body have been elected.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

At the time of the inspection, you had been the headteacher for a short time and it was noted in the inspection report that you were already having a positive impact. Everyone I spoke to during my visit was keen to stress how you are maintaining, and indeed intensifying, the pace of improvement. You are establishing clear direction and building confidence by swiftly tackling weaknesses, especially inadequate teaching. You are regularly checking the quality of teaching and learning, and following this up with support and challenge where necessary. As a result, recent lesson observations show that the quality of teaching is improving. You are providing high-quality information so that everyone is clear about the extent of the difficulties facing the school and also how these are being addressed. This openness and improved communication is an important factor in the school's improvement so far.

The new literacy and mathematics subject leaders are being effectively supported by the seconded deputy headteachers. As a result, they are beginning to influence the planning and teaching in their subjects. For example, the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) has been reorganised and teachers and assistants trained to implement the changes effectively. There are now systems for setting and tracking targets in reading and writing. These take the form of useful target cards which show pupils, teachers and assistants exactly what steps need to be achieved if pupils are to reach the appropriate levels. You have set clear expectations about the amount and type of work which pupils should be completing. For example, each week, all classes should undertake problem-solving activities in mathematics and an extended writing task. The provision of intervention activities and the systems for checking how well pupils are achieving were previously haphazard and ineffective. These weaknesses are being addressed. Agreed systems for managing behaviour and tackling poor attendance are already having a positive impact. Attendance this term is much higher than in previous years.

A useful review of governance has been carried out by the diocese. This identified some serious weaknesses and, as a result, the governing body has undergone significant change. The new Chair and Vice-Chair are passionate about improving the school and have set up fortnightly meetings with the headteacher to monitor progress against the action plan and evaluate the impact of action taken. Governors are linked to literacy and mathematics, and have carried out visits to learn more

about the subjects and the actions currently being taken to address weaknesses. Training is planned for the whole governing body and, in addition, the Chair and Vice-Chair are undertaking leadership training.

The school benefits from two days a week of senior leadership support from neighbouring schools. This is strengthening senior leadership pending the appointment of a full-time deputy headteacher. A local authority adviser, who knows the school well, is working closely with you and the governors to implement, and modify, where appropriate, the improvement plan. This plan, which you collaborated on, is both the school improvement plan and the local authority's statement of action. It is practical, focuses well on the key areas for improvement, and has clear and measurable milestones so that everyone involved will be able to keep a close eye on, and evaluate, whether the school is on the right track.

Following the monitoring inspection these judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Kent and the Diocese of Rochester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**