

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** 01173115323  
**Direct email:** suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

11 November 2013

Miss K Buzzing & Mr C Silk  
Headteachers  
South Bersted CofE Primary School  
Church Lane  
Bognor Regis  
West Sussex  
PO22 9PZ

Dear Miss Buzzing and Mr Silk

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to South Bersted CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 November 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 July 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:

- make strong links with good and outstanding schools to broaden and deepen understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning, and highly effective middle leadership
- refine the development plan by including indicators that actions are having the desired effect, throughout the year
- improve quality control and accountability in some areas by clearly identifying who is responsible for outcomes in those areas.

### **Evidence**

During the visit I met with both of you, with six members of the governing body, a representative of the diocese and a representative of the local authority, to discuss

the actions taken since the last inspection. I also visited all classrooms briefly. I evaluated the school improvement plan.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection you, as deputy headteacher and headteacher, have entered into a co-headteacher arrangement.

## **Main findings**

You both show commitment to ensuring that the achievement of pupils improves to become good, because of teaching that will be at least good, and strong leadership and management at all levels. The governors are highly supportive of this ambition; they offer useful challenge and support.

Your development plan addresses the appropriate priorities, and it is a useful working document. It contains clear descriptions of the impact of the improvements you will bring about, but it does not provide details of the steps along the way. This lack of interim measures could compromise the quality of governors' monitoring throughout the year. There is also an apparent lack of external validation of key aspects of your work at important points in the year. For example, there is no mention of occasional external checks on the quality of teaching and of pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. You reassured me that there are arrangements in place to enable these external checks to happen, but they need adapting to suit the new approaches you are taking in your plans to transform achievement.

There is now a better emphasis on accountability throughout the school. Increasing the frequency of checks made on pupils' progress to be half termly will improve your capacity to intervene rapidly to support the progress of specific groups and individuals. You have set demanding targets for pupils' attainment in each year, and these higher expectations are reinforced with rigorous performance management processes, with clear targets set for all teachers around the progress that pupils will make.

Unusually, the progress made by pupils eligible for the pupil premium was better than that of other pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 last year. I am pleased that you are well aware of the need to monitor this constantly to ensure that no gap opens, as achievement rises in the future.

Phonics (the sounds associated with letters and groups of letters) is a priority throughout the school in order to support necessary improvements in reading and in writing. There are currently several staff who play a part in ensuring its quality, but no one teacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that it is taught to a consistently high standard. This could reduce the efficiency of the monitoring of the quality of teaching in this important area.

Your co-headteacher arrangement has the advantage of enabling a flexible response to steering improvement, and you both seem quite clear about who does what. However, responsibilities need to be more clearly defined for the benefit of staff, and to strengthen your accountability to governors. For example, you both clearly recognise the vital importance of good teaching in bringing about the improvements necessary, and you are supporting the development of the quality of teaching effectively, but it isn't clear who is responsible for particular aspects of this. Neither is your sense of what 'good teaching' will look like in the school communicated coherently. Your plans for you and your staff to undertake a series of visits to good and outstanding schools will assist you in establishing a clear and common understanding of this. You currently have no fruitful links with any teaching schools and you have agreed to explore this source of support. Governors are also keen to develop links with other schools whose governors have well-developed systems of monitoring and evaluation, and to share good practice in holding you and other staff to account for delivering high standards.

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**

Support from the local authority has previously been very 'light touch'. Since the previous inspection this has been limited to some useful support for the writing of your development plan. There are indications that the local authority will now begin to work more closely with you, identifying appropriate schools for you to visit to see good and outstanding practice, and providing support to enable governors to offer high levels of challenge and support in the future. There is also the promise of support with developments in teaching and learning in English and mathematics.

The diocese is currently offering useful leadership support via their programme for new headteachers. This involves visiting a good school and working with an experienced colleague. They have agreed to look for other opportunities for you and your staff to see innovative and highly effective practice elsewhere, possibly working with a local training school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**