

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22  
West Lancs Investment Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566 937  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
**Direct email:**  
jsimmons@cfbt.com



2 December 2013

Mrs Jill Ryan  
Headteacher  
Royston St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
Vicarage Lane  
Royston  
Barnsley  
South Yorkshire  
S71 4QY

Dear Mrs Ryan

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Royston St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Barnsley**

Following my visit to your school on 29 November 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.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 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:

- develop the rigour of self-evaluation; build on examples of good practice in school and from others; and take robust action to overcome inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and other action plans were evaluated.

**Main findings**

Leaders have responded promptly to the findings of the recent inspection. The school improvement plan addresses the key issues in teaching and assessment. This plan is well supported by plans to improve English, mathematics and teaching and learning. The plan for

improving leadership does not explicitly acknowledge the developing role of assistant headteachers in initiating action and evaluating impact. These leaders are taking a stronger role in school improvement, assisted by planned professional development with leaders in other schools. Plans for improving governance will be completed following the self-review that started recently. Firm action is being taken to tackle under-performance in teaching.

Actions by the headteacher and senior leaders are beginning to develop a more rigorous, focused and self-critical approach to school improvement. Leaders have required teachers to use a range of success criteria in order to provide challenges that better match the abilities of different groups. Teachers' marking has been more strongly linked to these criteria, helped by shared marking between teachers. A monitoring exercise reinforced leaders' expectations of marking and identified areas of inconsistent practice. In mathematics, some teachers have started to analyse their weekly assessment of pupils' progress more systematically and to use information about gaps in knowledge and understanding to focus their teaching more precisely.

Teaching and support staff have started a new programme of brief, focused, class visits to explore leaders' questions about teaching and learning. This has helped to raise awareness of the headteacher's expectations of staff and to highlight inconsistencies in practice across the school. Strengths and areas for development have been documented more formally and shared more widely. These actions are beginning to create a culture where staff are becoming more used to classroom visits and to the process of giving and receiving critical feedback, as well as praise. Leaders are discussing options for the next stage of this process and have considered what to do if improvements are not seen. Leaders have also started to involve pupils in gathering evidence and commenting on the quality of learning behaviour in classrooms.

Governors have started a helpful self-review with the local authority. This audit has thrown up questions about the involvement of the wider group of governors, the structure and organisation of the governing body and its procedures, and the extent to which the wider governing body are informed about teaching, learning and pupil progress. A smaller School Improvement Strategy Group has been set up with lead governors, the headteacher and a local authority representative to monitor progress each half term. The Chair of Governors works closely with the headteacher, has a clear understanding of the key issues and is keen to bring about improvements in the school and the governing body.

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 provided constructive advice on school improvement planning. Before the recent inspection, the local authority had already identified a need for additional support and funded a partnership with the leader from another school. This partnership has recently helped the school to develop the use of success criteria in lesson planning and to devise a procedure to improve pupils' response to marking. The local authority has made a bid for funding for another school leader to continue the development of leadership and management.

The local authority has provided effective support for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and the review and development of the governing body. Some support has been provided to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and further work is planned. The local authority has increased the frequency of its visits and is actively supporting the work of the new School Improvement Strategy Group.

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

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**