

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 T Curl
Headteacher
Churchwood Community Primary School
Church-in-the-Wood Lane
St Leonards-on-Sea
TN38 9PB

Dear Mrs Curl

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Churchwood Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 23 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 November 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:

- Collect and record evidence of high-quality teaching across a range of subjects, apart from English and mathematics
- Improve the precision of teachers' planning so that the needs of more able pupils are met in whole-class sessions and activities planned for lower-attaining pupils meet their needs more closely
- Ensure that actions taken by the governing body to improve their effectiveness are evaluated by an independent, external body.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I also considered records of the checks made on the quality of teaching and records of pupils' progress and attainment.

Main findings

There is a noticeable sense of urgency in the school's response to the findings of the inspection in November. In the days following the inspection, senior leaders and governors rewrote the school's improvement plan to tackle the areas of the school's work that require improvement to be good. This new plan is well focused, with clear short-term and long-term targets for pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Many aspects of the plan have already been implemented and this is making a difference to the work of the school. For example, school leaders held a meeting with staff at the start of this term to revisit and reinvigorate the school's vision for pupils' achievement. This has helped to raise expectations and aspirations. The marking and feedback policy has been reviewed and most teachers now provide appropriate guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. Teachers have a greater understanding of how to use the information on pupils' progress to plan activities that are matched to pupils' needs. However, there are still occasions in lessons when more-able pupils are not extended and lower-attaining pupils have work set for them that does not precisely meet their needs.

School leaders have taken robust steps to improve teaching. They ensure that teachers receive clear feedback on what they need to do to develop their practice and that findings from lesson observations are followed up. Teachers have also had access to high quality training provided by the local authority. Senior leaders have collated a range of evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning and of pupils' work to support their judgements on the quality of teaching. At present, these records do not provide evidence of the quality of teaching across a wide range of subjects.

As a result of the section 5 inspection, inspectors recommended a review of the work of the governing body. This has already been carried out. Clear recommendations have led to changes in systems and processes and further work is planned for the coming terms. The governing body is now well placed to provide effective challenge and support to school leaders.

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 responded very promptly to the recommendations in the inspection report and has provided effective support to school leaders and the governing body. This has contributed to the improvement seen during this monitoring visit.

The school has some well-established partnerships with other local providers and the headteacher makes good use of these links and the opportunities for joint work.

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

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles

Her Majesty's Inspector