

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

13 May 2014

Mr Richard Hearn
Headteacher
Lacock Church of England Primary School
High Street
Chippenham
SN15 2LQ

Dear Mr Hearn

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lacock Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 May 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 February 2014. 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:

- divide up actions in the improvement plan into small, achievable parts, and add smart timescales.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. During the visit I met with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. I had a meeting with the leaders for English and mathematics, which focused on changes to their roles. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I had a tour of the school with you and the Chair of the Governing Body.

Context

Since the inspection two new governors have joined the Governing Body.

Main findings

The inspection report of February 2014 recognised that you had 'already acted to address' the weaker areas of teaching. In doing so you had introduced a 'more manageable' system of measuring how well pupils are doing. Since the inspection, you have sharpened this work further. You have wisely looked at pupils' starting points and track carefully the progress they make over time, and in lessons. You check regularly how well pupils are achieving and how well teachers are teaching. You ask challenging questions of teachers whose pupils are not making good progress. In this way, you are making your ambitious aims for the school, to be good or better at the next section 5 inspection, very clear to staff.

In pushing forward with school improvement, you have changed your leadership style. You have realised, that you needed to give your middle leaders greater responsibility. In this you have been successful. The leaders for English and mathematics have been coached in judging the quality of teaching and helping all staff to improve their practice. As a result, middle leaders are now making a discernable contribution to improving teaching. They are widening their leadership skills. The mathematics leader is helping teachers develop their subject knowledge related to addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The English leader is now checking that teaching assistants are asking pupils more challenging questions to develop their reading comprehension.

Teachers are now held more accountable for the achievement of their pupils. This is now strongly linked with procedures that determine teachers' salary progression. Targets set for teachers are against the performance of different groups of pupils or individual pupils. This approach is well linked to the training needs of teachers. These actions are improving teaching.

The school improvement plan focuses on the right things to improve teaching. There are clear targets for pupil achievement and some timescales. Improvements are evaluated in relation to their impact on pupil progress. However, the plan is too wordy, so that some actions are not precise enough. There is scope to complement this by breaking down actions into smaller, more achievable parts, and adding smarter timescales.

Governors have acted quickly to organise an external review of governance. This is taking place shortly. Meanwhile, governors and school leaders are drawing up protocols for governor visits, so that their purposes are understood by school staff and governors alike. The Governing Body provides support, while at the same time

holding you to account for the school's improvement. Governors have a clearer understanding of how the school now uses information on the progress pupils make. They know where teaching still needs to improve and support your expectation of consistently good practice in all classrooms.

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 provides a good balance of support and challenge. The review meetings with the representative of the local authority provide an opportunity for all parties to share their evaluation of what is working well and the next steps. The local authority partner has contributed to developing leadership skills in the school at all levels through support and coaching. Her work with middle leaders means that they are now carrying out their leadership roles with more precision.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech

Her Majesty's Inspector