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4 June 2014

Mr Andy Higgs
Headteacher
Bramley Church of England Primary School
Bramley Lane
Bramley
Tadley
Hampshire
RG26 5AH

Dear Mr Higgs

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Bramley Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the behaviour of pupils identified in the school's latest full inspection report.

Evidence

I gathered a range of evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- scrutiny of relevant documents
- discussions with leaders and staff.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time behaviour and safety requires improvement.

Context

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The proportions of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs, or who are entitled to free school meals, are below the national average. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils arriving or leaving during the school year is similar to that seen nationally.

In November 2012, the school was judged to require special measures to improve. Inspectors removed that requirement in November 2013. There have been a number of changes of teaching staff since the latest inspection. You joined the school as headteacher in April 2014.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There has been a notable improvement in behaviour since the last inspection. It still requires improvement, however, largely because some variability in pupils' attitudes to their learning remains.

Pupils and staff I talked with were clear that behaviour has improved significantly this school year because expectations have been higher. Pupils were keen to point out that since your arrival, a matter of weeks ago, you are 'pushing this further'. They talked about the shift, as they see it, from simply being told how to behave to being involved in making decisions and changes. Pupils particularly appreciate the way you and your deputy negotiate with them if they do something wrong. They feel that being asked 'how can we make it better?' or 'is it you, or just a mistake?' helps them to improve, by thinking about what they did and how they would react another time.

There has been a significant improvement in pupils' behaviour in lessons. I saw no evidence of the overexcitement or disruptive behaviour seen at the last inspection. This is because pupils are used now to different ways of working and most staff deal well with any pupils who are not on task. I did, however, observe variability in pupils' attitudes to learning, and this was directly linked to the quality of teaching. Where teaching was effective, it took account of what pupils knew and understood, tasks were purposeful throughout the day and teachers explicitly challenged pupils to improve. In response, pupils' attitudes were positive. They listened carefully to explanations, settled quickly and applied themselves to tasks. Conversely, where teachers were not clear about the purpose of activities, pupils lacked interest or enthusiasm for what they were doing. Although they did not disrupt others, some visibly switched off.

The vast majority of pupils behave well around school and at times when they come together. From the youngest children in the Reception class upwards, they are typically happy, confident and willing to cooperate. The whole-school assembly I

observed during the inspection was a calm occasion. Pupils came into the hall in an orderly fashion, settled quietly and, in the main, were attentive. The atmosphere at lunchtime was sociable as pupils enjoyed the opportunity to chat with their friends. Lunchtime staff confirmed this was typical, if a little quieter than normal, since all Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were out of school on a trip.

Pupils generally get on well together when playing outside, although there is some boisterous play, which occasionally leads to pupils hurting each other and falling out. Other pupils find this boisterous behaviour a bit intimidating at times. You are aware of this and have already started looking at options, such as designating an area for ball games. It is also important to make sure that there is always a good level of supervision before school and at playtimes which covers all areas.

Most pupils arrive promptly in the morning and the school's records show that attendance so far this school year is above average. The attendance figures for different classes are readily available but not for different groups of pupils. Since absence rates have been higher for some groups in the past, for example girls and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, it would be useful to ensure these figures are regularly reviewed and any underlining reasons considered.

You have been clear with staff from the outset that pupils' behaviour is intrinsically linked to the quality of teaching. In the short term, you have established minimum expectations of classroom organisation and practice which are showing a positive impact on learning and, as a result, behaviour. Plans are in place to consolidate staff's understanding of what good teaching and learning look like.

Equally, you know that systems for managing behaviour need to change if the school is to build on improvements seen so far. While it might have been appropriate in recent times for pupils to be sent more or less straight to senior leaders for poor behaviour, you are adamant that this practice should cease. In the same way, you are encouraging pupils to take more responsibility, and you expect class teachers and middle leaders to manage most behaviour on a day-to-day basis in future. Working with your deputy, you have already reviewed the behaviour policy to outline how you want this to work. You are taking time to consult with staff, and others, as you know they have need to have the opportunity to discuss and contribute to changes if they are to fully take them on board. Evidence gathered during my visit indicates that this is the right time and approach to take as inconsistencies have arisen over time. The profile of the current code of conduct and reward and sanctions systems varies between classes. Pupils I talked to perceived differences in the way staff deal with issues. As the new policy is implemented, it would be helpful to ensure that it is clear how, and by whom, information will be analysed to identify triggers or patterns to avoid repeat incidents.

Priorities for further improvement

- Implement plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning, making sure the links with behaviour are explicit.
- Finalise and introduce the new behaviour and discipline policy, and ensure it is consistently implemented.
- Carefully analyse information collected about behaviour and attendance to identify triggers and patterns, and take action to address these.
- Ensure a good level of supervision at all times when pupils are outside.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Bradley
Her Majesty's Inspector