

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

Direct T 01695 566857
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jkinsman@cfbt.com



16 June 2014

Mr Damian Marsh
Headteacher
St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Ramsbottom
Nuttall Lane
Ramsbottom
Bury
Lancashire
BL10 9JD

Dear Mr Marsh

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Ramsbottom, Bury

Following my visit to your school on 13 June 2014, 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 March 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:

- increase the frequency and rigour of the checks on teaching to make sure everyone follows agreed whole-school policies and to gain an accurate view of the quality of teaching in all classrooms on a day-to-day basis
- review the action plan so there is greater detail on long term actions and ensure there are clear indicators of success at key points in the year to check on progress and avoid slippage
- build on the new system for looking at school data to include a sharper focus on the achievement of different groups from their various starting points, including those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1
- support the governing body in gathering its own first-hand evidence to gain a broader view of the difference school actions are making to teaching and pupils' achievement.

Evidence

During my visit, meetings were held with yourself, the deputy headteacher, three subject leaders, four members of the governing body and two local authority representatives to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Your most recent school data and records of your checks on teaching were also considered. We visited each classroom to talk to pupils, observe them at work and to look at their books.

Context

Since the March inspection, the deputy headteacher has taken up a temporary post in a local school. The assistant headteacher has taken on the deputy headship role. This arrangement is due to end by January 2015. The Year 2 class are being taught by a temporary teacher. The number of pupils admitted to Reception will increase in the new academic year from 35 to 40.

Main findings

You, the staff and the governing body were shocked at the findings from the recent inspection. Not all agree the judgement was the right one for the school. However, everyone is beginning to dust themselves down and join you in your determination to bring about improvement. You have an honest view of the school's shortcomings and are in no doubt that there are weaknesses which need to be tackled to move the school to good at the next inspection. Your genuine desire to improve the school for the pupils, not just to please the next set of inspectors, is evident in your refusal to carry on with the status quo. You know continuing with the way you have worked in the past has not always brought the results you wanted.

You have been busy since the inspection, putting in some essential management systems to lay the foundations for future success. You have completely reviewed the way targets are set for teachers. This is helping to raise expectations and lift the quality of teaching. A new way of looking at school data is in place. This is shifting away from an over-emphasis on attainment by the end of Year 6 to a closer look at the progress pupils make from their different starting points. Consequently, staff and governors are gaining a better understanding of pupils' learning journeys across Key Stage 2. However, this new system is not strong enough, at this point in time, to keep a sharp watch on the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

You took immediate action to review and implement a detailed marking policy. Pupils' books show some teachers are fully behind the changes; pupils are receiving clear feedback to help them improve quickly. Not all teachers are following suit at the same pace. Some teachers are less keen to let go of using worksheets which continue to hamper pupils' opportunity to write fluently, creatively and on their own. You have been quick to check the quality of teaching and provide teachers with helpful feedback so they know what they need to do to improve. Nonetheless, these checks, including looking closely at pupils' books, do not always happen frequently

enough to make sure whole-school policies are being followed or helping you gauge the quality of teaching on a day-to-day basis in all classrooms.

Your work to date is beginning to bear fruit. Your own data show an improving picture. Although there has not been enough time for the current Year 6 to benefit from the recent changes by the time they took the end of Key Stage 2 tests, pupils' achievement is steadily rising elsewhere in the school. Almost half of the current Year 5 pupils have already made the progress normally expected by the time they leave Year 6.

Your improvement plan shows you are taking the issues raised at the last inspection seriously. However, your plan is too short term. It does not identify what success will look like at key points in the year to ensure you and the governing body can keep an eye on progress and prevent slippage.

Subject leaders have quickly stepped up to the mark. They are taking a much greater role in identifying pupils who are at risk of not making enough progress and ensuring timely and effective support programmes are in place. Nevertheless, you are still shouldering too much of the responsibility for change. Too many actions in the improvement plan have your name against them because you are not capitalising enough on your re-invigorated middle leaders to share the load. The governing body do not have a strong enough presence in your plan to help them live up to their role in monitoring the impact of your work.

Plans are underway for the governing body to review their own effectiveness with the support of a national leader for governance. They have also had some hand in shaping the school improvement plan. They have a growing awareness of pupils' progress because of the new data system. Your streamlined and informative reports keep them up-to-date with the school's work. As a result, they know where you are making headway. However, they are in the early stages of gathering their own first-hand evidence to gain a broader view of the difference your actions are making to teaching and pupils' achievement.

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 is providing effective support to help you on your journey to good. The support programme drawn up by local authority representatives is fit-for-purpose because it meets the needs of the school and you have been involved fully in shaping the activities. Local authority officers have helped you draw up your school improvement plan, commissioned a national leader to support the external review of governance and they have brokered support from a local school to help teaching assistants have a greater impact on pupils' learning. Plans are underway for a local authority officer with expertise in English to strengthen your drive to improve pupils' writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector