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24 October 2014

Mr Robin Jones
Headteacher
St Budeaux Foundation CofE (Aided) Junior School
Priestley Avenue
Plymouth
PL5 2DW

Dear Mr Jones

Requires improvement: second monitoring inspection visit to St Budeaux Foundation CofE (Aided) Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 20 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 second 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:

- make sure that progress in writing is consistently good throughout the school, especially for boys, more able pupils and those with special educational needs
- develop teachers' skills in checking pupils' progress during lessons and adapting the activities, pace and questions to meet the different rates of learning
- extend subject leaders' skills to include lesson observation and helpful feedback to staff.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and subject leaders, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and teaching school alliance to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. In addition, a telephone call was made to the school improvement partner. The school improvement plan and other key documents, such as information on pupils' progress, were evaluated. Lessons or part-lessons were observed in seven of the eight classes. Some lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. Pupils' books were examined in lessons.

Main findings

The headteacher has reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team and this is resulting in a much better focus on improving teaching and learning. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and provide lessons that engage and interest them. They are making better use of their assessments to plan work at the right level for the pupils. Due to improvements in the marking of pupils' books, pupils know how well they are achieving and what to do to improve their work. Not all teachers are checking pupils' progress during the lesson and adapting the activities, pace and questions to the pupils' varying levels of understanding. This means the work is often too easy for some pupils and too hard for others. Teaching assistants are beginning to ask questions that help pupils to think for themselves, but this is uneven across the school.

Pupils' achievement is rising due to the improvements in teaching. Pupils are now making as much progress in reading as they are in mathematics because reading books are matched well to their skills and they are encouraged to read more regularly. Their progress in mathematics remains strong. Progress in writing is not as positive as in the other areas, especially for boys, pupils with special educational needs and the more able, but it is improving. Many pupils enter Year 3 with limited vocabulary and some struggle with spelling and handwriting. Their lessons help them to widen their vocabulary and they are beginning to write more quickly and neatly in a joined style. The pupils are now encouraged to talk about topics before writing and this is helping them, and particularly the boys, to record their ideas. However, classroom displays are not used effectively enough to motivate the pupils or to help them to experiment with their writing. Pupils supported by the pupil premium are making better progress than others as the school has improved the support they receive.

Pupils continue to behave well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to learn and attend regularly. They say they feel safe in school, that there is little bullying, and they are confident to take any concerns to their teachers. A pupil

commented that, 'It is a very caring school and we accept everyone'. Another said, 'We interact with different years, like a family'. This was seen to be the case.

Senior and subject leaders are now more rigorously checking the progress of all pupils and this is underpinning the improvements in the school. They identify any underachievement through checking information on pupils' progress, teachers' lesson planning and pupils' books, and provide appropriate support. Subject leaders are not yet carrying out lesson observations, but training has been planned for them. The literacy leader is now making sure that progress in spelling and grammar is being planned across the school, although this is at an early stage. Greater links with the infant school and workshops for parents are also supporting pupils' progress.

Governance has improved following an external review. Governors are now linked to year groups and subjects. They visit the school regularly. They use a wide range of information, especially relating to pupils' progress, which enables them to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This helps them to know the questions to ask in holding senior leaders to account for the standards pupils reach. Governors regularly pose questions on the school's website which the headteacher answers. This increased challenge is helping to improve achievement. Governors manage the school's finances well and ensure pupil premium and sport funding are helping to raise standards. For example, the introduction of activities such as cheer leading is engaging more girls in sport. They also maintain an overview of teachers' appraisal, which is now linked more closely to the Teachers' Standards 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 school is making effective use of a partner school and the local authority, for example in checking the accuracy of its assessments. The support is not extensive as the school is now bringing about the necessary improvements itself.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater
Her Majesty's Inspector