

Tribal
Kings Orchard
One Queen Street
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5359
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

19 November 2014

Mrs Sandra Medley
Headteacher
St Georges VA Church Primary School
Pastures Avenue
St Georges
Weston-super-Mare
BS22 7SA

Dear Mrs Medley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Georges VA Church Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 November 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 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also met with a group of pupils and looked at their work books.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, three new support staff have been appointed to replace those who have either left or taken maternity leave. The teacher with

responsibility for leading the school's special educational needs provision is new to the post.

Main findings

The school's leaders are working hard to strengthen the school's performance and thereby raise pupils' standards. The initiatives to improve the quality of teaching are proving beneficial as some of the 2014 results demonstrate. The increased focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has led to improved results in the Year 1 phonics check and the Key Stage 1 assessments.

Year 1 pupils performed well in both the 2013 and 2014 phonics check, with most pupils reaching the standard expected nationally. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. Disadvantaged pupils did well with most reaching the standard expected nationally. In 2014, there were no Year 1 pupils with special educational needs. However, Year 1 pupils' achievement overall was lower than the school expected, as pupils failed to make fast enough progress during the year.

In 2014, Year 2 pupils performed well in the Key Stage 1 assessments. Overall, pupils' attainment increased from the previous year to levels significantly above the national average. Importantly, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels also increased from the school's 2013 results. In reading and mathematics, there is almost no difference between the performance of boys and girls. However, girls out-performed boys in writing. Disadvantaged pupils attained very well, out-performing other pupils in their year group.

Disappointingly, the Year 6 pupils' attainment in 2014 fell slightly from the school's 2013 results. This was partly because fewer Year 6 pupils reached the higher levels. As a result, Year 6 pupils' attainment overall was below the national average in mathematics, reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils did not make enough progress across Key Stage 2. Year 6 boys out-performed Year 6 girls in all subjects, except writing. Boys' attainment shows that they were approximately two years ahead of girls in mathematics and almost a year ahead in reading and English, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was lower than other pupils at the school. Pupils with special educational needs did well and achieved high standards, particularly in mathematics.

The school is making strenuous efforts to improve the quality of teaching. The local authority has been instrumental in providing support and guidance to strengthen teaching across the school. Working closely with the school's senior leaders, the local authority has initiated a coaching programme for teachers. The initiative is designed to help teachers consider how their teaching impacts on pupils' learning. The project is still in the very early stages of being introduced across the school, so it is not possible to evaluate its overall impact.

In addition, the senior leaders are taking action to ensure that teachers plan lessons that challenge pupils appropriately. The school's evidence shows that this initiative is still work in progress as teachers are not always challenging pupils to reach their potential.

Pupils generally behave well. They are attentive, respectful and motivated to learn. Nevertheless, a small number of pupils do not always engage in lessons and, on occasion, lose interest, which impacts on the class and slows learning.

To improve the quality of teachers' marking, senior staff have engaged all teachers in reviewing the school's marking policy. As a consequence, teachers are conscientiously recording comments in pupils' books to explain what has been achieved and how the work can be improved. However, on some occasions, the teachers' comments are not always precise enough, which hampers pupils' understanding of how to improve their work.

Teachers with responsibility for leading English and mathematics are increasingly working with staff to improve pupils' performance. They have a very clear understanding of the issues that need improvement. Both teachers are currently reviewing their respective subject improvement plans to ensure that the actions being introduced are supporting pupils to make good progress.

The teacher with overall responsibility for pupils with special educational needs has received appropriate training and been supported well in preparation for her new role. As she focuses on the performance of pupils with special educational needs she is identifying where change is needed. To plan for the changes identified, she has prepared a detailed action plan. At present, the plan highlights appropriate areas for development but it does not include quantifiable targets that can be used to evaluate the impact of each initiative on pupils' achievement.

The governing body is making a significant contribution to improving the school. The governors appreciate the level of detail that they receive from the headteacher about the school's progress. The headteacher's reports provide relevant information about the school's work, including how the school deploys and monitors the impact of the school's pupil premium funds. The governors are monitoring the impact of the school's improvement initiatives regularly and have a good overview of the progress being achieved.

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 working closely with staff and governors on supporting improvement and increasing pupils' achievement.

Although some of the initiatives to improve the quality of teaching are relatively recent, the projects have been well received by staff who are very motivated to work with local authority advisers.

The local authority's reviews of the school's work provide insightful reports that highlight what has already been achieved and where further work is needed. The reports provide useful information to the governors, which they use to monitor the school's progress.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for North Somerset and the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Yours sincerely

Ken Buxton
Her Majesty's Inspector