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Mrs S Ward
Headteacher
Bulford St Leonard's CofE (VA) Primary School
John French Way
Bulford Village
Salisbury
SP4 9HP

Dear Mrs Ward

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bulford St Leonard's CofE (VA) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 March 2015, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- re-focus the school improvement plan on the key issues arising from the most recent Ofsted inspection report
- clarify how leaders bring about improvements to teaching and learning
- improve teachers' planning to provide more challenging and aspirational learning experiences in all subjects

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, a representative of the local authority and three members of the Governing Body to

discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The inspector with the headteacher undertook a tour of the school, visited five lessons and reviewed a selection of more able pupils' work in English and mathematics. The inspector scrutinised the school's improvement and action plan.

Context

The chair of the Governing Body is new to the board. The post of vice chair is vacant.

Main findings

The school lacks a clear strategy to rapidly improve teaching to be consistently good. Leaders have introduced a number of initiatives to strengthen learning and eradicate weak teaching since the last inspection but these have not been sustained. The headteacher's time and focus is, rightly, on improving performance of individual teachers and managing the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Other school leaders have not stepped up to take effectual responsibility for improving teaching and learning and the headteacher has not insisted that this work is carried out. As a consequence there has been slippage in checking that actions to improve teaching and learning are consistently implemented across the school and proving successful.

The school improvement and action plan does not address the areas for improvement set out in the last inspection report. It lacks a decisive focus on teaching and learning and the achievement of particular groups of pupils, most importantly the more able pupils. The measures for judging the impact of teaching do not signal a determination to raise aspirations of pupils' learning. For example, there is no reference for pupils who are behind to make better than expected progress. Leaders have not made clear what constitutes consistently good teaching.

Whilst pupils' progress data is regularly collected, leaders are not focusing strongly on how well all groups of pupils are achieving. A regular look at pupils' books by leaders is used to validate the teacher assessment, but the process does not encourage teachers to look at how well lessons are challenging all pupils.

The efforts to improve teaching and learning in lessons are having mixed results. Leaders have begun to check on how effectively teachers use questions in lesson. This is beginning to encourage teachers to get pupils to think more deeply about their work. However the review of this work has not been completed within the time scales set by leaders. Not all teachers are applying leaders' expectations on how staff are to mark pupils' work and provide the guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.

Teachers' planning does not provide the challenge needed for the more able pupils and therefore does not support the higher aspirations leaders and governors have of the pupils.

The governing body receives reliable information about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Governors have used additional funds to enrich the curriculum through visitors and trips. They visit the school regularly to check up on improvements but the visit programme is not linked to the school's improvement plan. This limits how confidently they can challenge leaders' over the pace of change.

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

Neither the local authority nor the diocese are providing effective support to strategic leadership. An adviser has visited frequently to check on the school's direction and has a good understanding of what remains to be done. The local authority has helped the school find replacements for some teaching vacancies that have arisen over the year in Key Stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector