

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01173115246  
**Direct F** 01173150430  
**Direct email:** Sara.Whalley@Tribalgroup.com



15 May 2015

Mr Carl Hornsby  
Acting Headteacher  
Whitchurch Primary School  
22 Bristol Road  
Whitchurch  
Bristol  
BS14 0PT

Dear Mr Hornsby

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Whitchurch Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 May 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 January 2015. 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:

- Ensure that the marking policy is consistently used by all teachers and across all subject areas.
- Consolidate the improvements to ensure that they are sustained up to and beyond the next inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the acting headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher, three members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Each class was visited and a random selection of pupils' books was looked at. Informal discussions were held with pupils during lunch time. The school's improvement plans were evaluated.

## **Context**

There have been no staff changes since the inspection.

## **Main findings**

The overall picture of achievement is looking much better than this time last year. The assessment of pupils' work is more accurate because your teachers have a greater understanding of the different standards and levels of work expected. This is as a result of you and the teaching staff checking work with other local schools. Consequently, you have confidently chosen a significant proportion of Year 6 pupils to take the higher level of national tests in mathematics. The progress that pupils make is carefully recorded each week. Any individual underachievement, including those with special educational needs and those who are more able, are targeted during the following week.

It is clear that teachers are making sure that the purpose of each lesson is shared with their pupils. This is helping pupils know what they are going to learn so that they can check their understanding at the end of the session. Pupils are set tasks at different levels to reinforce and extend their learning. The older pupils talk about what they need to do next in their learning and make good use of the colourful new marking policy. This involves the use of a yellow marker, known as 'yippy yellow' which means their work is accurate and 'upgrade orange' which means they need to improve it. Although the quality of marking has improved since the inspection inconsistencies remain, particularly in mathematics.

The introduction of exciting and innovative ways to introduce a new topic in school are successfully motivating and engaging the pupils. For example, following the arrival of a large egg on the playing field, which necessitated the presence of the police and a 'forensic expert', the pupils wrote enthusiastically about where the egg might have come from. By inviting footballers, builders, plumbers and other professionals into school to share their experiences and work alongside the pupils. This is having a strong motivational effect on the pupils and is reflected well by improved achievement in reading and writing, especially for the boys. Pupils speak very positively about the changes to their school life and particularly enjoy their lessons which they find 'real fun'.

Teachers with responsibilities for leading subject areas are gaining a much better understanding of their role. The leaders in English and in mathematics have carried out lesson observations and have scrutinised planning documents and work books. Their findings have been fed back to individual teachers and areas for development have been set and acted upon. Teachers are working hard together to make sure that they plan meaningful lessons that stretch and challenge all pupils regardless of background, ability or starting point. For example, when studying the work of

Vincent Van Gogh, pupils relished the opportunity to develop the skill of writing a newspaper report about the famous painter.

Governors have taken on board the findings of their review and are now better placed to support and challenge senior leaders. The work of the new clerk has brought a professional approach and each governing body meeting now has extremely detailed minutes of meetings which clearly identify the actions to be taken. Governors now have a greater understanding of the information produced about the progress that pupils make and ask knowledgeable and challenging questions in response to it. For example, when the acting headteacher suggested he wanted to introduce a new way to develop pupils' writing, one governor researched the programme and fed back to the others. This enabled them to ask the right questions to the acting headteacher and helped them make an informed decision. Governors talk of the new 'professional feel' to the governing body. Governors regularly check the progress being made against a detailed school improvement plan and measure its success against agreed targets. They are determined that they will not be caught out again with a set of unexpected results in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests.

While the inspection judgement was a surprise to the school community there is no doubt that all members are contributing well to the improvements required to move the school to good and beyond. There is now a need to consolidate these improvements to ensure that they are sustained up to and beyond the next inspection.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The establishment of a link with Weston All Saints Primary School (WASPS), where the headteacher is a National Lead in Education (NLE) has ensured that teaching staff at Whitchurch are accessing high quality support. This enables them to see good practice and share ideas. Working together with other local schools has ensured that staff can secure their understanding of the levels of work which can be achieved and how their pupils are performing when compared to other schools. A strong link has also been made with West Town Lane Primary School in Bristol which is supporting the development of the new marking policy.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**