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Mrs E Chirgwin
Headteacher
Bream Church of England Primary School
High Street
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Dear Mrs Chirgwin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bream Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 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. Please also pass my thanks on to the governors, teachers and pupils I met during my visit.

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. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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 all teachers:

- use the new resources more effectively to match the work better to each pupil to make sure that all do as well as they can
- check the learning of each pupil during lessons to make sure that all learn at a good pace
- use more directed questioning, including involving other pupils to build on answers, to check learning and to deepen pupils' understanding

- build on the improvements in marking pupils' work to make sure that all pupils know what they should do next, make sure they do what is expected and check to see that this improves their learning
- focus the raising achievement plan on the improvements that can be observed in lessons and pupils' work with clear steps that can be used to check progress.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, four members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and the school's latest information on pupils' achievement were evaluated. The inspector visited all classes with the headteacher to look at pupils' work and talk to them about it. The inspector also had a more detailed look at the work of a range of Year 6 pupils identified from the current achievement information.

Context

The January 2015 inspection report notes the significant disruption to the school staffing and leadership at that time. This disruption has continued as the deputy headteacher is still on long-term sick leave and another teacher has been away since the start of the summer term. The school has also been affected by maternity leave and one class has a long-term cover teacher. A teacher has been seconded from a local school to act as deputy head to strengthen the senior leadership team. There has been a stable leadership team since April.

Main findings

The current leadership team has been in place since April. Under the strong leadership and direction of the headteacher, the leadership team has started to make sure that the range of developments introduced recently are beginning to have a positive effect. These include introducing teaching resources to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar, and mathematics. Leaders have set much clearer expectations for marking pupils' work and making sure they know what they should do to improve and make progress. All of these changes are leading to improvements in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. The headteacher is supported well by the Governing Body. However, to sustain these improvements it is important that the stability of the current leadership team is maintained. The governors know this and are working with the headteacher and the local authority to do what is required.

The school improvement plan identifies clearly and accurately what needs to be done to deal with the improvement points arising from the recent inspection. However, it is not always clear what the impact of the planned actions will look like

in classrooms. This means that some teachers are not sure what is expected of them and makes it more difficult for senior leaders to see what difference has been made.

There is a good atmosphere in the school. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. Staff morale, while still a little fragile, seems much improved. During my visit, pupils in all classes showed good attitudes to their work and behaved well. They enjoyed the work they were doing, were keen to talk about it and worked well together. They played well together during break time. I did not see any of the examples of the poor behaviour noted in the January inspection report.

The school's own evaluation of current pupils' achievement shows improvements in all aspects of reading, writing, including in their spelling, punctuation and grammar, and in mathematics. These improvements can be seen in pupils' recent work. Senior leaders check each pupils' progress carefully to make sure that all do as well as they can, although not all teachers do this well in lessons. The headteacher, supported by other leaders, quickly identifies if a pupil is at risk of falling behind and provides good support to help them catch up. The teaching in most classes is good and the expectations of pupils' work are higher. The changes introduced recently are applied consistently across the school. Teachers now need to have the confidence to build on these changes to improve teaching further.

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 has supported the school well during the recent instability. Additional funding has been provided to deal with some staffing issues and to help the school purchase teaching resources. The local authority also helped with the secondment of an acting deputy headteacher. This school has been satisfactory or judged to require improvement over a series of inspections. The local authority now has a greater sense of urgency in supporting the school to improve quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

James Sage
Her Majesty's Inspector