

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 01173115246
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Direct email: sara.whalley@tribalgroup.com



9 July 2015

Ms R Beecham
The Acting Headteacher
Loders CofE VC Primary School
Loders
Bridport
DT6 3SA

Dear Ms Beecham

Special measures monitoring inspection of Loders CofE VC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 7 and 8 July 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Dorset.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good or better throughout the whole school and so raise pupils' achievement, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - teaching is consistently challenging and keeps pupils engaged, well behaved and focused on learning
 - all pupils are given work which is neither too easy nor too difficult
 - all pupils are very clear what they have to do when given a task
 - Teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in a range of subjects
 - pupils strengthen their grammatical skills by writing regularly at length
 - activities match accurately the levels at which pupils are working, especially for the most able pupils and including children in the Reception Year.
- Improve the leadership of the headteacher and the impact of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - devising ways to restore staff and parents' and carers' confidence in the headteacher and developing ways to communicate effectively with all parents and carers
 - providing training for middle leaders so that they can improve their skills of monitoring and evaluation
 - developing the role of the governing body so that it supports and challenges school leaders more effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 7 and 8 July 2015

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including school improvement action plans and notes from governors' visits to the school. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, governor representatives, teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority, a representative from the regional diocese and a small group of parents. The behaviour of pupils was observed during lunch times. The inspector also met with two senior leaders from the academy trust that the school will be joining in the autumn of 2015.

Context

The Chair of Governors has recently resigned. The Executive Headteacher and another senior leader from the multi-academy trust the school will join have been working in school two days a week for the past term to offer practical support to the acting headteacher, staff and governors. The teaching hours of two part-time teachers have been reduced.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The most recent checks on pupils' learning indicate that the majority of pupils throughout the school have made good progress this academic year. The Year 6 pupils have reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with national expectations. A few more-able pupils in Year 6 have achieved the highest level in mathematics. Children in the Reception and Year 1 class are making particularly good progress because their teacher and other adults know them well as individuals and provide stimulating learning activities that take account of their experiences and interests. For example, following a recent class trip to the seaside, pupils were asked to create 'a model picture' that helped them to successfully remember what they had done. This activity then helped pupils to speak confidently to adults about their trip and enabled their teacher to give good support to pupils in writing an account of their day out.

The few disadvantaged pupils in the school are well provided for and have made good progress this year. There is no gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school.

Teachers in Years 2 to 6 use information on pupils' achievement to inform their lesson planning and ensure the work they set is not too easy or too difficult. Teachers acknowledge that there are weaknesses in pupils' grammatical skills which will be a focus for improvement in the new academic year. The few pupils who require additional support due to their specific learning needs are making good progress relative to their starting points.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching continues to improve. Teachers are now providing pupils with regular opportunities to develop and use their writing skills in a range of subjects. For example, pupils' writing is illustrated through the many engaging displays seen throughout the school and older pupils have written thoughtful poems about the Second World War and detailed recounts of science investigations. Teachers match work carefully to the levels at which pupils are working, especially for the most able pupils and the youngest children.

Leaders of the academy trust are providing clear direction and support to teachers in helping them to plan and provide better quality teaching for pupils. Where learning is at its best, teachers explain ideas clearly to pupils and check frequently on pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 2 and Year 3 English lesson the teacher helped pupils to write interesting similes that would improve the quality of their writing.

Teaching assistants are experienced and make sure the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs are effectively provided for. The good communication between teachers and teaching assistants means information about pupils' progress is shared regularly in order to provide the most appropriate support for pupils. Senior leaders have established good communication with teaching assistants. The additional training undertaken by teaching assistants is helping them to support pupils' learning more effectively.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is typically good throughout the school. The inspector observed pupils' good attitudes to learning in all the lessons observed. Pupils are given time to think and then share their ideas with one another. Teachers carefully plan lessons that challenge and keep pupils motivated to learn. The pupils who spoke with the inspector said they enjoyed coming to school and 'feel really safe and cared for'. One pupil summed up their views by saying, 'Teachers don't just see it as a job they treat us like their children.'

In lessons, the inspector saw pupils speaking respectfully to adults and providing support to, and showing appreciation of, one another. Outside lessons, pupils play well together and enjoy the space and good quality resources provided for them. Staff take their safeguarding duties seriously and they are effective. They make sure pupils are safe at all times. Older pupils say they are taught how to keep safe when using the internet and they would speak to an adult in school if they had any concerns online. Pupils' attendance is average. The school works closely with families in order to improve pupils' attendance. A small number of families continue to take holiday during term time.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders' regular checks on the quality of teaching ensure any weaknesses are identified quickly and that teachers receive the professional development they need to improve their practice. Senior leaders have provided effective support to middle leaders on how to gather information about the achievement of different groups of pupils. Morale amongst staff is good because all say they feel supported and encouraged in their work by senior colleagues, who are willing to support them and demonstrate best practice.

The governing body is in the process of reconstituting in preparation for becoming part of a multi-academy trust in the autumn. Senior leaders from the academy have begun to work closely with the governing body to help it make this transition and to carry out statutory duties more effectively. The acting headteacher provides governors with informative and detailed reports on the progress of pupils. Governors say they value the improved support and quality information they are now regularly being given. Each member of the governing body has taken on responsibility for a specific area of the school's work. The governors who met with the inspector confirmed they are beginning to acquire a clearer understanding of the school's work. The good progress made by pupils this year confirms views that pupils' learning has not been adversely affected by the changes to the leadership of the school in the past year.

Staff and parents who spoke with the inspector were unanimous in their positive views about the school. They all agree the school looks after their children well and keeps them safe. The views of parents concur with the judgement of the inspector. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents' confidence in the leadership of the school has been restored. Parents especially appreciate how hard staff have worked to make sure pupils' learning has not been adversely disrupted in the past academic year because of the changes to leadership. Parents are glad that the uncertain future of the school has now been resolved and say they are 'positively excited about becoming part of an academy'. Parents hold high expectations for the future of the school.

External support

The local authority continues to work closely with the school to resolve the remaining leadership issue and provide training for teachers to strengthen their expertise in English and mathematics. The diocesan representative continues to provide valuable pastoral support to the leadership team and the school.