

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Mrs Laura Brockhurst  
Headteacher  
Walberton and Binsted CofE Primary School  
The Street  
Walberton  
Arundel  
West Sussex  
BN18 0PH

Dear Mrs Brockhurst

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Walberton and Binsted CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 6 October 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 April 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, in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics, the early years leader, seven members of the governing body and a group of pupils, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority to discuss the school's progress. The school action plan was evaluated and records of monitoring by senior leaders were reviewed. Brief visits were made to all classes, to see the school in action.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in April 2015, the school's special educational needs coordinator has taken on additional responsibility for the school's new phonics scheme. A new teacher has been appointed, to teach in the early years for one day a week.

## **Main findings**

You demonstrate great commitment and an infectious enthusiasm in tackling the areas for improvement identified at your inspection in April 2015. Other leaders and governors are equally focused and are right behind you as you strive to ensure your school is judged to be good at its next inspection.

Your detailed school action plan fully addresses all the areas for improvement. The specific targets and actions show exactly what you are aiming for and how everyone will get there. A helpful timeline ensures all staff and governors know what to focus on each month and there are clear criteria for you to measure success. Now the plan is underway, you realise the need to review it regularly to ensure there is enough time to secure each improvement before moving on to the next.

Subject leaders for English and mathematics have a better understanding of their role because leadership meetings focus more closely on school improvement. Their action plans are sensibly linked to the school action plan, so everyone is working to the same agenda, and you rightly hold them more accountable for their targets. Subject leaders have refined criteria for checking key areas of learning such as pupils' books. As a result, teachers receive sharper development points to help them improve their practice. The new scheme to teach letters and sounds aims to help pupils with gaps in their learning catch up with where they should be; it is too early to evaluate the full impact of this work. The recently introduced mathematics challenge board motivates pupils to have a go at problem-solving activities outside the classroom.

Leaders ensure that teachers direct lessons more carefully to meet pupils' needs. For example, pupils now incorporate key grammar skills to strengthen their extended writing. Lessons now include a greater emphasis on targeted questions, which make pupils think hard. Pupils have noticed this greater degree of challenge, saying, 'They expect you to do more work and better work.'

You have also helped teachers to improve the quality of their feedback to pupils, so it has greater impact. There is more time for pupils to read and respond to comments, or to discuss their work with their teacher. One pupil summed all this up succinctly, 'We do it; we check it; we improve it.'

Your investment to improve provision for children in the early years is paying off. The inside and outside learning environments now include a well-balanced range of activities covering all areas of learning. There is an increased focus on 'bumping into writing': notably there are more labels, signs and opportunities for writing, to help children develop better skills in literacy. The children are more engaged in their learning because teachers link activities more closely to children's interests.

Governors continue to be fully committed to supporting the school, alongside adopting a more strategic approach to their work. New initiatives such as 'children's chat weeks' help governors better understand pupils' views. Governors also meet with staff to check progress towards key actions. Armed with this information, the new governor strategy group meets regularly to review the school's targets, providing robust challenge to you and other senior leaders.

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 local authority has rightly stepped up its support, providing beneficial visits to develop leadership, governance and teaching. You are sensibly organising visits to other schools so that teachers profit from seeing good practice elsewhere.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Gard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**