

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 April 2018

Miss J Evans
Headteacher
Winkfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School
Winkfield Row
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG24 6NH

Dear Miss Evans

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Winkfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- secure good quality teaching consistently in all year groups
- raise standards in writing for all groups of pupils, and increase the proportion of pupils who achieve a greater depth of understanding to enable them to reach high standards.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher, the English and mathematics subject leaders, four members of the governing body, including the two co-chairs of governors, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's raising achievement plan was evaluated. A range of documents were scrutinised, including

pupil progress information, outcomes of monitoring activities, governing body minutes and local authority visit notes. Together with you and your deputy headteacher, we visited most classes to observe pupils' learning and look at their work. I looked in more detail at pupils' work in books with the English and mathematics subject leaders. I had a meeting with a group of pupils.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of staff changes. The assistant headteacher left in December 2016. Six teachers, including the mathematics subject leader and deputy headteacher, left the school between January and July 2017. Four teachers, the new deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, and the mathematics subject leader were appointed in September 2017. One teacher left in December 2017 and one in January 2018. One teacher was appointed in January 2018. The two co-chairs of governors took up their roles in the summer term 2016. Four new governors were appointed in January 2017.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection, the capacity of leadership within the school was severely reduced, due in part to the ill health of the deputy headteacher. In addition to this, the quality of teaching was not good enough. Outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2017 were disappointing. Attainment was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Successful action was taken to improve boys' progress in writing in Year 6. Boys' achievement was above the national average at the high standard in writing in 2017. Boys outperformed girls. However, overall attainment for Year 6 pupils was below the national average in writing. You were fully aware of the weaknesses in teaching, and took decisive action to address areas of underperformance.

Senior leaders and governors are under no illusions about the urgency of the task in hand, to ensure that all groups of pupils reach the standards they are capable of achieving. In the past, some pupils did not make sufficient progress over time, particularly in writing. As a result, there is a legacy of underachievement. Since September 2017, the pace of improvement has accelerated. You set high expectations and provide clear guidance to all teachers about the progress that pupils are expected to make. The assessment system that you introduced when you took up your post as headteacher in September 2016 is helping teachers to check on pupils' progress more carefully. Regular meetings that you have with each teacher to discuss the progress of individual pupils is having a positive effect on addressing any underachievement quickly. Senior leaders ensure that additional support is put in place to help pupils catch up.

Your deputy headteacher has made sure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are supported well. Clear and

specific plans are in place for each pupil to ensure that their learning needs are met effectively. As a result, they are making similar progress to other pupils. Some are making better progress, and the gap between their achievement and that of other pupils is diminishing.

Your English and mathematics subject leaders provide strong leadership to ensure that the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is cohesive and systematic. They have implemented effective planning procedures, including for guided reading, and check that plans for pupils' learning address any previous gaps in their knowledge. They provide bespoke support for each teacher according to their identified areas for development. Expectations have been raised. Teachers are now more aware of how they can ensure that all groups of pupils make at least expected progress and what more pupils need to learn to enable them to achieve a greater depth of understanding.

Your English subject leader has implemented a new strategy, using high-quality texts, to engage pupils in writing. This technique ensures that pupils have a purpose for writing. It motivates and supports them to use a breadth of vocabulary in their writing, and apply the skills that authors use to captivate the reader. The English subject leader has also raised the profile of spelling within the school to make sure that pupils develop good spelling skills and understand the relationship between the meaning of words and spelling patterns. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to select the most appropriate level of challenge in their work. They understand that they can start with the 'good' task, but can further challenge themselves to move on to the 'better' or 'best' activity. Higher-ability pupils are motivated to start with the 'better' task and show their deeper level of understanding by completing the 'better' tasks successfully. This is having a positive influence on improving standards in writing. But there is more to be done to make sure that a higher proportion of pupils achieve age-related expectations and the most able pupils achieve a greater depth of understanding and reach the high standard.

Following the previous inspection, governors were aware that the quality of teaching was not good enough. They fully supported you in your quest to eradicate poor-quality teaching, but recognised that the turbulence in staffing was a cause for concern for parents. Their recruitment procedures have been largely effective. But there is more to be done to ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school. Governors have ensured that the leaders they have appointed have effective skills to raise standards and bring about school improvement. They have been proactive in making sure that there is greater stability in staffing and are mindful of the well-being of staff during a period of change.

School leaders have set ambitious targets with the school's raising achievement plan. Precise actions and clear measurable success criteria provide clarity of purpose and underpin the work being carried out to bring about rapid improvement. Responsibilities to implement specific actions are shared across the senior leadership

team. A range of suitable checks are identified within the plan to enable school leaders and governors to carefully monitor the school's progress towards achieving its ambition for all pupils to achieve well.

The governing body is determined to ensure that every pupil is provided with their entitlement to a good quality of education. Governors are relentless in their checks and monitoring activities, to make sure that the actions set out within the raising achievement plan are being achieved successfully. Regular audits of governors' skills sets ensure that governors with appropriate expertise are appointed. Monthly full governing body meetings provide a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders to ensure that there is an uncompromising focus on raising pupils' achievement. Regular visits to the school enable governors to see for themselves the work that is being done to improve pupils' progress. Governors make good use of reports from the local authority to ensure that judgements made by teachers and school leaders on pupils' achievement are validated.

External support

The local authority has provided a range of effective support for the school since the previous inspection. The headteacher welcomed the support of an interim deputy headteacher, which was funded by the local authority, during the long-term absence of the substantive deputy headteacher. The local authority standards and effectiveness partner has worked alongside school leaders to check on the accuracy of assessments and to provide training and support for governors. Regular visits to check on the quality of teaching and learning, together with senior leaders, have validated the school's judgements.

I am copying this letter to the co-chairs of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Oxford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bracknell Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector