

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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18 June 2018

Mrs Susie Arnold  
Executive Headteacher  
Branton St Wilfrid's Church of England Primary School  
Valley Drive  
Branton  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN3 3NB

Dear Mrs Arnold

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Branton St Wilfrid's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 June 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 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 has 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:

- ensure that activities in the early years are planned with precision to enable children to make swifter progress in all areas of the setting, including during independent activity and outdoors.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the head of school, the leader for literacy, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local

authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Together, we visited all classrooms to talk to pupils and to look at work in pupils' books. I also spoke to pupils during lunchtime.

## **Context**

You were new to the school at the time of the last inspection. Governors recognised the need to build leadership capacity and recruited you to become the executive headteacher and promoted your deputy to be head of school in September 2017. Nine teachers have left the school since the inspection, and you have recruited five experienced teachers this academic year.

## **Main findings**

You fully accepted the outcome of the last inspection report and quickly set to work to address the issues raised. Your school improvement plans are detailed and are backed up by methodical and frequent monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. You communicate your high expectations in a clear and concise manner, making sure that everyone understands how things should be done. You have engendered a high degree of consistency and a sense of 'how we do things around here'. For example, teachers routinely share the purpose of the lesson with their pupils, encouraging pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Despite half of the teaching staff being new in September 2017, your systematic approach has resulted in a greater degree of consistency in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Middle leaders are now clear about their roles and share the responsibility for keeping the quality of teaching constant. Pupils' attainment is on track to be above last year's national average, and pupils' progress across school is improving, particularly for high prior-attaining pupils. Between 15% and 20% of pupils in each year group are not performing at standards expected for their age, but all have very specific reasons why their progress has faltered, and it is not possible to identify specific groups who are underperforming.

Governors have acted on the review of governance to strengthen their practices. They devised an action plan and began to play their part in checking on the school's progress towards becoming a good school. You ensure that governors receive detailed reports so they can question you and the head of school on all aspects of the school's work. Minutes of meetings show that governors challenge leaders, particularly on the progress that pupils make.

You regularly review the success of teaching methods and realised that something needed to be done to improve the teaching of writing. Together with your literacy leader, you reviewed the sequence of teaching to enable pupils to make much better progress in writing. Pupils' books show that over four fifths are working at the standards expected for their age in every year group. Pupils show pride in their work. They write at length in neat, cursive script, and the standard of spelling,

punctuation and grammar is high. Teachers have taken opportunities to enable pupils to continue to develop their writing in subjects other than English. For example, pupils undertake regular scientific inquiry, recording their experiments appropriately.

Leaders' careful tracking is enabling you to measure the progress of all pupils in school. Your expectations are high, and you regularly hold teachers to account through discussions about the work in pupils' books. Teachers have been supported through staff meetings and training to plan more demanding work into their lessons. They challenge their pupils using demanding whole-class texts and problem-solving tasks. Your school assessment information shows that around one third of pupils in each class are now reaching higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is double the proportion of pupils who have previously reached higher standards.

Children arrive into the early years with skills and abilities that are at least typical of, and in some cases above, those usually seen in children of a similar age. Children are articulate and confident. They play well together and can sustain concentration. Leaders have improved the quality of activities offered to help children to develop independence and resilience, making improvements to provision in the outdoor area. However, planning for these activities is not sufficiently precise, and some fine-tuning is needed to fully exploit the learning opportunities presented. Staff keep detailed records of children's achievements, but some children could make even stronger progress from their already high starting points.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are respectful, and pupils show they are at ease in school. Despite mounting excitement through the morning as pupils looked forward to taking part in a street party to celebrate the royal wedding, pupils were attentive and focused during lessons. Pupils are polite and kind to one another and reported that there is very little falling out.

You have introduced rigour into record-keeping through a new online system, which allows you to track the patterns of behaviour and to quickly identify safeguarding concerns. You have ensured that all staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding, and you, the head of school and an additional member of staff have received enhanced training. All staff have been trained to identify pupils who might be at risk of radicalisation.

### **External support**

Your work as a consultant leader is helping you to identify and reflect on strong practice in other schools, bringing the best ideas back to Branton St Wilfrid's and strengthening your clear direction and sharp leadership. You have worked effectively with the local authority, which has recently redesignated the school as 'self-improving' in recognition of the swift improvements brought about by you and your staff.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Sheffield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**