

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5323  
**Email:** suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

30 April 2014

Mrs C Wood  
The Headteacher  
Westlands Primary School  
Homewood Avenue  
Sittingbourne  
ME10 1XN

Dear Mrs Wood

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Westlands Primary School**

Following my visit to your academy on 29 April 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection I met with you, your deputy headteacher, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the Principal of The Swale Academies Trust and the executive headteacher of the trust's primary schools. The trust's statement of action and the academy's action plan were evaluated. We briefly visited lessons around the school to see teaching and learning.

### **Context**

There have been no major contextual changes since the previous inspection.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

You, your senior leaders and governors are working with urgency and determination to bring about rapid improvement in your school. Your actions are clearly focused on tackling the key areas that need improvement. Your action plan includes appropriate targets and detailed descriptions of what will be achieved at key points in time. You are regularly and effectively evaluating the impact of your approaches against these and adjusting them when needed.

The trust has recently established an executive board (EB), consisting of a small group of well-qualified and experienced governors who steer the work of the governing body. This has enabled a more intensive focus on improving the school. As a result you are being held to account more regularly and effectively. Work is underway to develop the skills of the main governing body. So far, this has included providing training on data and how to carry out effective governor monitoring visits to the school. An external review of the full governing body to identify areas of governance that still need further development is now underway.

Middle leaders are increasingly effective in checking the quality of teaching and the provision for which they are accountable. They use well focused activities such as book scrutiny, pupils' conferences and pupils' progress meetings to do this. They provide helpful feedback to teachers about their strengths and areas for development and support them to improve. This includes enabling them to observe and learn from existing good practice in the school. One example of the impact of this more effective middle leadership is the improvement in the provision for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. The school's data show that these pupils are now catching up with their peers.

Teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection. We saw evidence of this in the lessons visited. Pupils are now better motivated and more engaged in learning. Work is better matched to individual pupils' ability. There is evidence of higher expectations for writing across the curriculum and of pupils editing and improving their written work. One pupil commented, 'Things are much better this year because we work harder.' The school's data indicate that these developments are leading to improvements in pupils' progress.

You now communicate with parents more regularly and they have more opportunities to get involved in their children's learning. They have been able to attend such things as phonics workshops and 'Bug Club' training to help them to do this. Your newly-established parents' forum has enabled you to consult with parents more effectively. Your most recent progress review noted that parents were very positive about the school.

Attendance has continued to improve since the previous inspection. The school is tracking attendance more closely and weekly attendance clinics have now been introduced for parents whose children are not attending school regularly enough. Initiatives, such as 'March with a Mate' which encourages and rewards the older

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pupils to take responsibility for getting themselves to school on time, have contributed to this continued improvement.

The Swale Academies Trust knows and supports the school well. It has ensured that a range of expertise is available to you, in addition to that provided by the trust's executive headteacher for primary schools. This includes opportunities to link with other schools and the support of an appropriately qualified consultant who carries out regular and helpful progress reviews.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**