

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus  
Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

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

Direct T: 0121 679 9158  
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



7 October 2014

Mr Paul Madsen  
Headteacher  
Thomas Bullock CE VA Primary School  
Pound Green  
Shipdham  
Thetford  
IP25 7LF

Dear Mr Madsen

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thomas Bullock CE VA Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 October 2014, 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 May 2014. 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. The school should take further action to:

- monitor the use of mathematics computer homework to ensure that all pupils have access to it and are using it effectively to support their learning in school
- give leaders more opportunities to lead initiatives within school and increase links with other schools to build up expertise and observe good practice.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, a representative of the current governing body, a representative of the local authority, the prospective Chair of the new Governing Body, a representative of the Diocese of Norwich and the Chair of

the Thomas Bullock Trust to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and self evaluation were scrutinised. Short visits to classrooms, work scrutiny and conversations with pupils were also conducted.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, three members of staff have left. The school has been in discussion with the Diocese of Norwich, the local authority and the Thomas Bullock Trust with regard to academisation. This is due to take place later this term.

## **Main findings**

The governing body was formally disbanded in July 2014 in the expectation that the school would convert to an academy from September 2014. This has not yet happened. A new chair of governors has been appointed by the Diocese of Norwich. She has considerable experience and has already been in regular contact with the headteacher to discuss the progress the school is making to address the issues highlighted in the recent inspection report. The original governing body is planning to start meeting again while the process of conversion is finalised.

Since the last inspection you have acted decisively to identify areas of weakness. A number of initiatives to improve teaching have also been introduced by school leaders and there is evidence that some of these are starting to have an impact.

The school's development plan has enabled the leadership to focus on the progress of pupils. Every lesson now has four levels of challenge for the pupils and they are directed towards the next task that will enable them to make progress. Pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking and writing skills in a variety of contexts more often. The introduction of the new mathematics curriculum and assessment procedures are now well established. A focus on mental mathematics has also been introduced but it is too early to see the impact of this. A mathematics computer homework has been introduced, you understand that it must be monitored closely to ensure that it complements the work in lessons.

School leaders in English and mathematics check the quality of the pupil's work within school and the school also employs an external consultant to check the standard of this work. The school has made contact with other local schools and leaders have already visited these schools to learn from their practice. There are plans to continue these links over the coming year. The school has now identified teachers to lead different national curriculum subjects. These teachers are enthusiastic about their new responsibilities.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

There is a consensus that the school will convert to an academy with Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) in the very near future. The local authority has withdrawn support for the school and the Diocese of Norwich has been putting in effective support through the newly appointed chair.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk and the Diocese of Norwich and as below.

Yours sincerely

Pete Sewell

**Associate Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese