

Tribal  
Kings Orchard  
One Queen Street  
Bristol  
BS2 0HQ

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 5359  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com



23 October 2014

Mrs J McCarthy  
Headteacher  
Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School  
Hyde Lane  
Creech St Michael  
Taunton  
Somerset  
TA3 5QQ

Dear Mrs McCarthy

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 June 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:

- strengthen the school improvement plans by using the starting points of pupils in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 to insert clear pupil progress targets with termly attainment targets. The plans should also ensure that the governors have a linked responsibility to ensure the successful implementation of the actions to be taken.
- ensure senior leaders and governors attend an Ofsted seminar 'Getting to Good'
- members of the governing body should use the outcomes of the external review alongside further training to ensure that they can fully support and challenge the school.

## **Evidence**

To evaluate the action taken since the last inspection, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I undertook a series of short visits to lessons, looked at pupils' English books and a range of school documentation about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The school improvement plans were also evaluated.

## **Context**

Since the last section 5 inspection, several leadership roles have been assigned or reassigned in the school. These include having a lead teacher for Key Stage 1, and two governors now have a specific oversight of school data. During my visit, the governing body were in the process of having an external review.

## **Main findings**

The initial disappointment with the judgements of the inspection in June has largely been overcome and is now accepted by staff and governors. After an initial dip, staff morale has improved and all have a shared desire and determination to make the required improvements in their practice. Everyone involved with the school now has a clear picture of what the school needs to improve and how this will be achieved, for example through the 'then and now' document to measure success. Parents are kept well-informed through the 'post Ofsted' newsletters and they are justly confident that the right changes have been made to ensure the school quickly improves.

The school has made very good use of the findings from the section 5 inspection to drive up achievement through a direct focus on improving the quality of teaching. Your overarching action plan is, as you acknowledge, detailed and complex. However, you have broken it down into sub-sections that are easier to follow and are linked to key areas and terms when things need to be completed. It is important that you feel comfortable with using the action plan to help marshal the improvements needed. The plan has specific targets for pupils' progress and achievement measures in Years 2 and 6. You are aware that the current ones for pupils in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 need to be sharpened and strengthened once you have a clearer measure of their starting points using your new assessment system. The use of different people to monitor the main strands of the plan who are different from those evaluating the impact of actions being taken would ensure greater accountability and shared responsibility. It is also vital that others, most notably the governing body can monitor it effectively.

You have improved the checking of teachers' performance. The leaders for English and mathematics have looked at teachers' planning, pupils' books and conducted

lesson observations in the summer and autumn terms of 2014. As a team you have identified key improvement points across that are appropriate for all staff as well as key development points for individual teachers. Through good quality feedback and coaching, it was clear from this visit that teachers have listened and acted upon the advice given to them. Teachers are much better at matching the work they give to meet the varying needs and ability levels of the pupils. In mathematics, this is done through the weekly assessment of pupils, which is then used to determine the level of challenge each individual needs for the particular mathematics topic being taught the following week. In English, the use of 'Wow' starters, such as having a live goat in the school field, has made pupils more interested in writing as it has given them more of a sense of the purpose and a clear reason to write down their thoughts and ideas.

The governing body has become less dependent on reports from you about the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The two 'data governors' have met with the assessment coordinator and have reported their findings on the progress and attainment of pupils back to the Curriculum, Standards and Inclusion Committee. They have produced simplified records that are accurate and easy for all governors to understand. This initiative is working very well. It is helping the governing body to increase and maintain its capacity to check things out for itself. Governors now need to build on this example in other aspects of their duties. The outcomes of the external review and further training will provide a good opportunity for them to reflect on and sharpen their skills in holding leaders fully to account for the school's performance.

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**

The school has been getting good external support from the local authority, neighbouring schools, as well as utilising the expertise and contacts that you have made in the past. Training is cascaded, which along with the increased support and coaching is steadily increasing the teaching and leadership expertise within the school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Somerset and the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**