

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

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



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Mrs Lesley Shellard
Southwick Church of England Primary School
Hollis Way
Southwick
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 9PH

Dear Mrs Shellard

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Southwick Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 April 2015, 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 December 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 strategic monitoring and evaluation by identifying when governors and leaders review the action plan for its impact on learners.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, three members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement and action plan was evaluated. The inspector visited four lessons jointly with the headteacher, and reviewed progress data and scrutinised a sample of English and mathematics books of pupils in years 1, 2 and 3.

Context

A local leader of education is providing support for school leaders and managers. A member of staff has been appointed leader of English.

Main findings

You have moved quickly to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The school's improvement and action plan responds comprehensively to the priorities set out in the inspection report. The actions are precise. You have established a systematic process for reviewing the impact of the action that involves senior leaders and all staff. This ensures staff are routinely considering the impact of improvements in their teaching on the pupils' progress. The plan sits firmly at the centre of your review cycle and you are using it to hold teachers and leaders to account for school improvement. Senior leaders and governors are undertaking their responsibilities with regard to implementing the actions set out in the plan. However, the plan does not establish specific times for governors and leaders to review the impact of planned actions to develop their evaluation of the school's work.

Our visits to lessons showed pupils working hard. Teachers are responding well to the high expectations you have of all pupils in their writing and mathematics. They are following the agreed policies in regard to presentation and handwriting. Teachers' feedback to pupils during lessons is helpful. However, in the lessons visited we did not see disadvantaged pupils receiving additional attention. There were good examples of the learning support assistants helping pupils through discussions and taking responsibility for clarifying the expectations of the lesson.

The review of governors' effectiveness has combined well with the key messages from the 'Better Governance' conference they attended. They have made effective adaptations to their structure and are challenging your plans to assess the short-term and long-term benefits for pupils.

The push to ensure all staff are aware of, and active in, improving reading, writing and mathematics has seen more pupils' meeting and exceeding the expectations of their age by the end of Year 2. The pupils who started Year 3 behind where they should be in reading and writing have closed the gap on their year group. Many of the disadvantaged pupils are benefitting from the use of the pupil premium funding to provide additional teaching of the skills they need to keep up with their year group.

You have used the experience of local schools to deliver an effective combination of lesson observations, reviewing pupils' work and regular checks on attainment. This work allows leaders and staff to review the progress towards ensuring that the quality of teaching is good and that pupils are making stronger progress than in the past.

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 local authority has provided your school with ten days of support and challenge. The help from the local leader of education has been timely and effective, particularly in helping leaders to develop confidence in accurately monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness. Teachers involved in the detailed review of pupil performance, led by the local leader of education, are reflecting accurately on how they inspire and encourage pupils to become motivated learners. You have encouraged your staff to use the strong links forged with the local community of schools to develop thorough assessment systems ready for next academic year.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector