

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 July 2018

Emma Howlett
Newtown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Queen's Road
Gosport
Hampshire
PO12 1JD

Dear Ms Howlett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Newtown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 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:

- reduce the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, ensuring that pupils of all abilities are fully challenged by their work.

Evidence

During the inspection I met with you, other senior leaders and members of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with subject leaders, a mixed group of staff and a group of pupils. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. You and the deputy headteacher accompanied me on visits to a number of lessons and we toured the site during lunchtime. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I also looked at

a range of other documentation.

Context

At the time of the last inspection you were the school's interim headteacher; a month later, you were appointed substantively to the post. An interim deputy headteacher was seconded to the school for the spring and summer terms of 2018. A permanent deputy headteacher takes up post in September 2018.

Main findings

You and the leadership team have focused sharply on the key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, while sustaining and building on the school's existing strengths. Much has been achieved in the past year, and the school is well placed to continue its improvement. Leaders and governors have a clear and accurate understanding, both of the progress that has been made and the challenges that remain.

Your top priority has rightly been to improve teaching. Leaders provide effective support and coaching to help staff develop and improve their practice. Teachers that I met spoke very positively about this process, seeing it as constructive and helpful. The quality of teaching is improving. There is more consistency across classes and year groups. You have correctly identified where to target future development to embed this further. Teachers now typically expect more of their pupils. They make greater use of information about what individual pupils have already achieved to set work at the right level of difficulty. However, some pupils say that they could be challenged and stretched more at times, particularly in mathematics.

Good work has been done to strengthen provision for phonics. A range of valuable training has been provided, tailored to staff needs. This has led to a wider range of activities to interest and challenge pupils when learning their letters and sounds. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check increased significantly this year.

Pupils increasingly have more and better opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills. They have greater opportunities to write at length, in different contexts and across subjects outside of English. You have carefully ensured that teachers have the same high expectations of how well pupils write, whatever the subject or context. This is leading to improvements in the quality of pupils' writing.

You have strengthened teaching in mathematics. Teachers increasingly employ different and more varied strategies to make lessons engaging for pupils. They use more practical examples and contexts to help pupils understand the mathematics and its applications. Pupils now have greater opportunities to solve more interesting and stimulating problems. All of this is helping pupils to make good progress in

mathematics.

Pupils' outcomes are improving across the school as teaching becomes more consistently effective. Children in Reception have made more progress this year than children did last year. A greater proportion reached a good level of development, with a large proportion of disadvantaged children reaching this measure. Pupils' attainment in the key stage 1 assessments also improved in reading, writing and mathematics. However, while improving, inconsistencies remain in pupils' achievement across the school. Some older pupils have gaps in their knowledge because they were not taught well when they were younger. This can sometimes prevent them from accessing some tasks in lessons. Individual achievement is checked very carefully and staff are working systematically to identify gaps in pupils' learning and provide appropriate help and support.

Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities benefit from well-organised provision and support. Specific work with individual pupils is evaluated carefully to ensure that it is having an impact. You have successfully improved communication with parents and carers of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. 'The Lodge', the school's resource base, provides valuable intensive support for pupils with complex needs who would otherwise struggle in class or face potential exclusion. This provision is still quite new, and leaders recognise the need to plan carefully so that individual pupils can be reintegrated successfully into classes once their needs have been met.

The good behaviour seen at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. Pupils behave well and typically concentrate intently, even when they find tasks difficult. Valuable work has been done to review and improve lunchtimes. These are managed well, with a range of engaging activities on offer. Teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors collaborate closely to ensure that pupils experience consistent expectations and responses from everyone.

The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school. They recognise the improvements that have been made. The results of the Ofsted survey Parent View and the school's own surveys point to improving parental satisfaction. Parents appreciate the high levels of visibility of you and other senior staff. The school recently redeveloped its reporting to parents to provide more detailed information. The draft reports that I saw were informative and written well, giving parents a clear picture of their children's progress and next steps.

The leadership and management of the school have been strengthened further. You sensibly restructured the senior team to ensure that responsibilities are focused on the school's current needs. Subject leaders for English and mathematics make a valuable contribution to the development of their areas, monitoring and supporting the work of other teachers. Governors are ambitious for the school and provide effective challenge to check leaders' decisions. New governors have been recruited to strengthen the make-up of the governing body and provide some educational

expertise. Next year's school improvement plan focuses on the correct main priorities. It is currently in draft form, and you recognise that further work is needed to sharpen the way in which progress will be monitored and measured.

External support

The school has been very well supported by the local authority. Assistance has been targeted on the most important areas and evaluated carefully to check its impact. Well-focused specialist support in English and mathematics has strengthened the ability of subject leaders to oversee and monitor teaching in these subjects. The local authority also arranged for the secondment of a deputy headteacher from a local infant school. She has provided valuable general support and has been able to share her particular expertise in provision for pupils in Reception and key stage 1. The local authority is now rightly scaling back the level of support to reflect the school's improving effectiveness and capacity.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Portsmouth and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell

Her Majesty's Inspector