

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
BRISTOL
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 0845 123 6001
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 0117 315 0430
www.ofsted.gov.uk **Email:** rebecca.jackson@tribalgroup.com



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Ms L Watson
Headteacher
Davidson Primary School
Dartnell Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 6JA

Dear Ms Watson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Davidson Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you and your staff provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the vice chair of the governing body and the pupils who met me at the end of the morning.

Since the last inspection there have been some changes to the intake of the school. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as a first language has continued to rise and there has been an increase in the number of pupils who have not attended school before arriving in the United Kingdom. The largest group of pupils is of White British heritage and increasing numbers of pupils of Black African heritage are joining the school. Pupil mobility has remained high, with a large number of pupils joining the school throughout the year.

As a result of the inspection on 30 November and 1 December 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement, especially in English, has improved recently. This is because of the school's sustained focus on developing the quality of writing. In the 2010 national tests, the percentage of pupils achieving expected levels in writing rose appreciably and contributed to a significant rise in overall levels of attainment in



English. The introduction of the Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) programme in the Reception classes has led to considerable improvement in children's phonic skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. As children enter the school with skills that are well below age-related expectation, these outcomes are strong evidence that increasing numbers of children are making good or better progress. Attainment in mathematics has also improved, but not as dramatically, and the school is now turning its attention to improving achievement in this area. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that the overall picture of attainment and progress is at least satisfactory and continuing to improve.

The school tracks the progress of all pupils, including those who join mid-way through the year with very limited English language skills. The school has very good processes to tailor support to individual pupils so that they can be integrated quickly and happily and gain access to the curriculum. School leaders and class teachers assess the performance of all the different groups of pupils every term, and, if there is underachievement, they take decisive action.

The quality of teaching has improved even further since the last inspection and good practice in the use of assessment is widespread. In all lessons observed during the inspection, teachers made learning intentions clear and shared criteria with the pupils so that they knew what they had to achieve and could judge their own success. Generally, teachers plan lessons with greater attention to the needs of individuals and use varied teaching methods to engage and enthuse their pupils. There is evidence that teachers give their pupils opportunities to write for different purposes in other subjects. For example, pupils wrote tooth stories in science and created instructions to make a gadget for a spy in design and technology. However, senior leaders acknowledge that there is still work to be done to ensure consistency across the school, for example, in the amount of written work in books and in the precision of marking.

The recent introduction of key strategies such as 'Building Learning Power' has led to a focus on developing skills for learning in lessons. Pupils can explain why skills such as resilience, resourcefulness and collaboration are important for them. The school is improving this area of its work and knows that the next step is for teachers to explain in lessons how pupils can demonstrate that they are being successful in developing these skills.

Senior leaders make good use of a range of monitoring activities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Changes in the way that lesson observations are recorded and followed up have led to further improvements in the overall quality of teaching. Middle leaders, who were relatively inexperienced at the last inspection, are now making a strong contribution by driving improvement in their areas of responsibility. Senior school leaders and governors are rigorous in evaluating the school's effectiveness and are self-critical in comparing the school's performance with national and local authority benchmarks. They are aware that levels of



attendance are only just average and that further concerted effort is needed to improve this. The track record of improvement and the determination to continue to develop and make progress mean that the school is demonstrating a greater capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has made good use of support from the local authority to improve the teaching of writing and has worked closely with another school to develop the use of assessment to support learning.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting continued improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2009

- Focus more clearly on expected progress in learning when class teachers, subject and year leaders and senior managers are planning, monitoring and evaluating lessons.
- Raise attainment in writing through planning more opportunities for writing across the curriculum, particularly for extended writing.
- Ensure that the good practice in the use of assessment and tracking in some classes becomes the expectation in all classes.

