

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



5 May 2011

Mrs J Ejdowski
Headteacher
Haydon Abbey School
Weedon Road
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP19 9NS

Dear Mrs Ejdowski

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Haydon Abbey School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to your staff, the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body and members of the school council for giving up their time to talk to me.

Since the last inspection, there have been some staff changes. The leadership of the school has been secured with the appointment of a substantive headteacher in October 2010, following a period of acting headship from April 2010. Two teachers have been appointed to take up their posts in September 2011 to cover resignations this year. A further post is about to be advertised. A refurbishment of some facilities to bring the Nursery classes into the main building alongside Reception and to improve office accommodation is nearing completion.

As a result of the inspection on 2-3 February 2010, 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

While the attainment of pupils in the Year 6 national test results fell in 2010 and was below the national average, this represented satisfactory achievement for pupils during their time in the school. The school's data show that improvements in teaching and learning for pupils currently in the school are leading to faster rates of progress than previously, particularly in Years 1 to 4. This places pupils in a better



position to achieve well by the time they enter secondary school. The progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6, who have suffered from the greatest turbulence in staffing, is slower. Teachers use their understanding of pupils' attainment satisfactorily to identify and plug gaps in their knowledge and understanding. However, the progress these pupils have made from the end of Year 2 falls below the school's raised expectations for achievement.

The improved systems for reviewing pupils' progress are robust. Teachers understand their accountability for pupils' progress and are increasingly using assessment information to plan work that is appropriate for pupils of different abilities and need. Care is taken to identify the action needed to improve the performance of individuals not making the expected rate of progress. Increasingly, leaders analyse the progress of different groups. The school is aware that Pakistani pupils do not achieve as well as others and initiatives are in place to provide additional support to close the gap. Similarly, there are signs of improvement in pupils' attainment in mathematics in Year 6. This had fallen below that of English over the last two years. The way in which the school is identifying and addressing a range of issues demonstrates its ongoing satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

The headteacher's approach to improving teaching and pupils' learning has been systematic. Inadequate practice has been promptly identified and appropriate support provided to bring about improvement. Leaders work closely with the local authority to plan and evaluate termly priorities, ensuring that initiatives become embedded and that change is managed at a sustainable pace. However, staff are aware that more remains to be achieved if pupils' progress is to accelerate. Teachers have responded positively to the help they receive from local authority consultants, and to the opportunities to observe and discuss good practice with staff in other schools. They show an enthusiasm to bring about further improvement. Consequently, additional support is in place to further increase the proportion of good or better teaching.

In the sample of lessons observed during the visit, there were examples of good challenge and opportunities, in particular for more-able pupils to discuss their ideas before committing their thoughts to writing. In these instances, pupils were fully engaged in their tasks because they found their activities interesting. For example, when writing a Haiku poem, some pupils were required to choose an animal for themselves which made the activity more interesting and challenging. However, these good features are not consistent in all lessons. In some classes pupils are passive, doing what is asked of them but not being given tasks to help them to become more independent in their learning. Pupils commented particularly about improvements in behaviour, which helps them to concentrate more on their learning. Pupils' books are marked regularly and pupils have a good understanding of the quality of their work and their targets. However, pupils are not yet routinely expected to follow up on the advice teachers provide in their marking.



The quality of learning in the Reception classes has improved because of the changes made to both the indoor and outdoor environment. The outdoor area has been fully resurfaced and is now used as an outdoor classroom for a wider range of activities than previously. The indoor classrooms have been reorganised with clearly defined areas for different activities. Teachers carry out more regular assessments and use the information effectively to identify where children need to develop their skills and knowledge and to plan activities which maximise the use of the new arrangements. Children find their activities motivating, for example when using the interactive whiteboard to develop their understanding of subtraction as they make the bottles fall when singing Ten Green Bottles.

The success of the emphasis on developing links with parents and carers is reflected in the recent improvement in attendance rates. The range of initiatives, such as class rewards for 100% attendance and calling home on the first day of an absence, have reduced absence. This follows a period when absence had risen to levels considerably above those found nationally. The new arrangement where parents are welcomed into classrooms at the beginning and end of the school day provides a good opportunity to discuss any concerns at an early stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings
Additional Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2010

- Develop provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving the use of assessment in Reception to ensure that teaching and activities are always closely matched to all children’s learning needs
 - providing all children with stimulating activities in a well-organised environment indoors and outside.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so that it ensures pupils’ progress is good, rather than satisfactory, by:
 - focusing teaching sharply on the full range of pupils’ learning needs, particularly the more able
 - giving pupils more opportunities to work collaboratively
 - helping pupils to improve their work by requiring them to respond to developmental feedback given through marking.
- Work closely with pupils, their parents and community to ensure that the recent dip in attendance is halted immediately and to promote good attendance.
- More rigorously analyse how teaching contributes to pupils’ learning so that focused action is taken to promote improvement in each class, particularly in Key Stage 2.