

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
BRISTOL
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 0117 311 5319
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 0117 315 0430
www.ofsted.gov.uk **email:** matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com



17 June 2011

Dr Melanie Rose
Headteacher
Ben Jonson Primary School
Harford St
London
E1 4PZ

Dear Dr Rose

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Ben Jonson Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 June 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 pupils and staff who made time to meet me.

Since the last inspection in January 2010, significant changes to teaching staff have occurred. This includes the departure of several teachers and the appointment of six new teachers, five of whom are newly qualified teachers.

As a result of the inspection on 14 January 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the last inspection, children now enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills expected for their age, except in writing, calculating, shape, space and measure and physical development, where their skills are low. Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 make good progress. In 2010, by the end of Year 2, attainment overall and in mathematics rose for the first time in several years, going from low to broadly average. Attainment in reading and writing remained broadly average. This improving trend in overall attainment was mirrored in the end of Year 6 tests in 2010. Pupils made good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics. Consequently, pupils' achievement was good.



The school is on track to maintain this improvement for the second consecutive year. Inspection evidence and school data indicate that many of the current pupils across the school make good progress, with some making outstanding progress. Attainment is likely to improve further, with significant improvements in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers over time, although this is inconsistent at times.

In many cases, progress is accelerating as a result of good teaching, the introduction of new targets, improved planning and assessment and focused interventions, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Staff at all levels, along with pupils, attend three meetings a year. These meetings consider pupils' current attainment, and future targets are set. Pupils who are in danger of underachieving are signposted to various intervention programmes in literacy and numeracy. New interventions include sponsorships in literacy and numeracy and regular achievement assemblies; these have raised expectations for all.

The teaching sampled during the inspection was variable, but good overall. In the strongest lessons, teachers use their understanding of pupils' prior knowledge to set challenging tasks for all pupils, including the more able. Good questioning by teachers, group work and use of 'talk partners' provide pupils with opportunities to practise, model and rehearse their ideas and develop their speaking and listening skills. As a result of this, pupils become confident, articulate learners, eager to share their views. On occasions, assistant teachers are used effectively to support learning in the introduction to lessons. Marking in some instances is giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve. However, all this good practice is still not consistent across the school. Occasionally, the pace of learning is slow and expectations are not high enough to secure good progress.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, resources and planning have improved significantly, resulting in better utilisation of the outdoor learning area. In Reception, the three classrooms have become three specific learning zones: 'Creativity', 'Oracy' and 'Discovery'. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning, with a strong emphasis on first-hand experiences and the opportunity for children to practise new skills. Children's learning in the classroom is reinforced in the outside area, while adult questioning and modelling of language help to develop children's language skills. Children make good progress as a result of good teaching.

All adults working in Reception meet several times a week to discuss their observations of children's learning and to plan their next steps. This enables the curriculum to be tailored to individual needs and interests. Joint planning and greater discussion have helped to develop more consistent and reliable assessments. Staff are now considering ways of refining their overview of children's profiles during their time in Reception.



The headteacher and senior leadership team have a strong grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The phrase 'realising potential' is shared by all so that the school has been successful in creating an environment in which pupils are eager to learn. The school development plan accurately identifies the areas of development; however, the success criteria in some subject plans are not always specific enough. Subject leaders have been involved in a range of monitoring activities and some evaluation has taken place to measure the impact of this work. The school recognises it now needs to extend this across all areas of school improvement to further raise pupil outcomes.

The support from the local authority has been appropriate. In particular, the school appreciated the help given to develop the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The brokering of links with similar providers and the general advice to the team have helped to improve this part of the school.

As a result of the changes made since the last inspection, pupil outcomes have improved notably, demonstrating the school's good capacity for improvement. To date, this has delivered good progress in the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection.

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

Susan Gadd
Her Majesty's Inspector



Once the school has had 24 hours to report any factual inaccuracies, the post-inspection letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – except for academies
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation.

The letters should also be copied electronically to:

each member of the inspection team,

A copy with editing marked up should be forwarded to the:

Lead inspector



Annex

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

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, develop the use of the outside area so that by September 2010, it is in constant free-flow use and offers a range of assessed activity to help children learn and develop.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, improve the quality of assessment so that the end-of-stage assessments are reliably accurate.
- Improve teaching throughout the school so that:
 - an increasing proportion of pupils achieve the nationally expected levels, and the higher levels, in English and mathematics
 - tasks are sufficiently challenging to extend learning for all groups in all lessons
 - teachers fully develop their skills in the use of assessment in the classroom.
- Develop fully the skills of managers at all levels so that planning, teaching and monitoring ensure that pupils do not suffer any gaps in their learning of basic skills.

