

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 3115319  
**Direct F** 0117 3150430  
**Direct email:** matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com

2 February 2012

Mr Richard Riordan  
Headteacher  
Cabot Primary School  
Halston Drive  
Bristol  
BS2 9JE

Dear Mr Riordan

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Cabot Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 February 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to pupils, staff, members of the governing body and the representative of the local authority that contributed to the inspection. I was also grateful for the opportunity to meet with several parents and carers.

Since the previous inspection, three teachers have left the school and been replaced. An additional teacher has been recruited following a rise in the number of pupils on roll. In September 2011, the substantive headteacher was seconded to lead an informal partnership with another school in the locality. Under this arrangement, the headteacher spends approximately half the week in each school. Consequently, the school has appointed internally an acting headteacher and an acting assistant headteacher. The subject leader for mathematics was appointed in December 2011. Four members of the governing body have left and two have joined.

As a result of the inspection on 16–17 September 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.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Since the previous inspection, there has been a marked improvement in the achievement of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2011, pupils' attainment rose strongly to be broadly in line with other schools at the end of each key stage. Those pupils that left school at the end of Year 6 made significantly better progress in English and mathematics than other pupils nationally. Observation of pupils' learning in a sample of lessons and their work seen in a range of books show

that pupils are making noticeably better progress across the school, often from very low starting points. Progress seen in pupils' books is generally stronger in English than in mathematics, but there are no consistent differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as those known to be in receipt of free school meals. Recent assessments are cautious, but the increasing quality of pupils' work in books confirms that improvements are being sustained. Results for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are predicted to be close to national figures.

While attainment generally remains below the average, particularly in Year 4, the school is taking robust action to ensure that underachieving pupils regain lost ground. Termly meetings to discuss the progress of individual pupils ensure that appropriate levels of support and challenge can be provided. Many pupils have made great strides to catch up in their learning in reading and mathematics as a result of individual teaching programmes. The challenge for the school is to trim down the number of interventions in light of the stronger teaching taking place in lessons.

### **The quality of teaching**

The school's determined actions have ensured a more consistent approach to lesson planning, marking and the classroom environment. Assessment information is used increasingly well to match tasks to pupils' needs, but learning objectives are not linked sharply to age-related-expectations. Pupils made good progress in around half of the lessons observed. In these lessons, the teacher built skilfully on previous learning and used their secure knowledge of subjects to model important skills effectively. Every opportunity was taken to challenge pupils and extend their vocabulary. Pupils with additional needs, such as those at the early stages of speaking English, had valuable opportunities to learn by doing. For example, two Year 6 pupils baked biscuits while learning to use connectives when writing a recount. Nevertheless, in some lessons observed, the pace of learning was too slow and teachers did not question pupils sufficiently about the reasons for their answers.

Pupils are making greater use of their investigative skills in mathematics and science. Regular practical investigations supplement the good range of written work in pupils' books. In lessons, pupils are making greater use of technical vocabulary such as discussing the notion of variables when establishing a fair test. Pupils solve mathematical problems on a regular basis and there are increasing opportunities for them to apply key skills in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils developed their data handling skills while learning about the contrasting environment of Weston-super-Mare. The careful presentation and layout of pupils' work in books was a constant feature across the school. The use of coloured highlighters to identify what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve is established well. Pupils make frequent use of success criteria in lessons to evaluate their work and that of others. Targets for pupils' future learning are in place and pupils generally know the next steps they need to take to progress to the next level.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

During the inspection, pupils behaved well, showing positive attitudes towards learning in lessons and when gathered together in assembly. At lunchtime, they played cooperatively with each other, making full use of the extensive outdoor facilities. Pupils, parents and carers reported that behaviour had improved since the previous inspection. Comments such as 'no bullies' and 'This is a friendly place' were typical of the pupils' views.

### **The quality of leadership and management of the school**

The substantive and acting headteachers have formed an effective partnership which has sustained the school's improvement. Targets are increasingly ambitious, but lack prominence in plans for improvement. Staff and members of the governing body speak positively of the quality of support they have received both from the local authority and by working with other schools. Increasingly, the school is taking a lead in local developments and using effectively the expertise of its own staff. The improvements in behaviour, teaching and learning are evidence of the school's greater capacity for further improvement.

Members of the governing body are developing a clearer understanding of their role and are more involved in monitoring the school's work. An annual calendar of meetings has been established, along with a programme of termly visits linked to improvement priorities. Members' contribution to self-evaluation remains at an early stage of development. Visits are supported well by clear evaluation questions and the regular reports from the headteacher provide members with a detailed view of the school's performance. At the time of the inspection, the school's procedures for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers met current government requirements.

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

Ian Hancock  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2010**

- Raise attainment at the end of Year 6 so it is at the national average by:
  - developing pupils' skills of investigation in science
  - improving pupils' ability to solve real-life problems in mathematics
  - helping pupils to develop the necessary reading skills to be able to understand the technical language needed to make progress across the curriculum.
- Increase the amount of good teaching throughout the school by:
  - shortening introductions and involving pupils more in the early part of lessons
  - ensuring pupils settle down quickly to individual or group tasks with a clear understanding of what needs to be done
  - more actively involving pupils in identifying the criteria they can use to measure how successful they are in their own learning.
- Ensure the governing body plays a fuller role in evaluating the school's performance.