

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 0117 3115319
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 0117 3150430
www.ofsted.gov.uk **Direct email:** matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com

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Maria Hadjisoteris
Headteacher
Earlham Primary School
Earlham Grove
London
N22 5HJ

Dear Mrs Hadjisoteris

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Earlham Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 October 2012, and for the time you gave to our telephone discussion and planning meeting. Thank you for the information which you provided before and during the inspection and for your engagement in joint lesson observations. Discussions with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority were very helpful in evaluating the progress the school has made. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned for the time they gave and for the welcome I received.

Since the previous inspection, seven teachers have left the school and been replaced, including by one long-term supply teacher. An assistant headteacher has been appointed. Five new teaching assistants have joined the school and one higher-level teaching assistant is teaching Spanish for one day per week. A nursery assistant has left and been replaced by a supply nursery assistant. One new parent governor has been elected.

As a result of the inspection on 22 February 2012, 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 is making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved. Children make satisfactory progress from their starting points. They enter Year 1 with skills below those expected for their age. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. From these low starting points at the start of Year 3, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 in reading and

writing. However, too few of them make expected progress in mathematics. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in mathematics is well below average.

The quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, has not improved significantly. Teaching does not ensure that pupils can make faster progress in order to catch up. Consequently, pupils are working below the expected standard for their age in many classes. For example, the rate of learning in mathematics lessons is too slow and work in pupils' books confirms that too few are making or exceeding the expected progress. Leaders know that there remains some inadequate mathematics teaching and not enough is good. In too many lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough. Pupils are not fully involved in independent learning and in too many lessons seen they rely a lot on their teachers. Pupils lose interest quickly when questioning involves only a few of them giving a response. Often, the pitch of the lesson is not accurate because the work set is not challenging the pupils to do as well as they can. Teachers do not always check whether pupils find the work too easy or too difficult and they do not adapt lessons to meet pupils' needs.

Marking often provides encouraging comments but is not specific enough to be helpful to pupils. Teachers' comments do not always tell pupils what they have done wrong and or how to improve their work. Some teachers provide additional tasks as part of their marking feedback to deepen or extend learning but this is not the case in all classes. Pupils do not know their individual learning targets in mathematics and writing. They are not clear therefore about how they can make progress overall from one level to another.

The senior leadership team has been strengthened with the recent appointment of the assistant headteacher. Senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leaders observe lessons and look at the progress in pupils' books. While teachers receive verbal feedback following observations, written feedback is not provided quickly enough and it does not comments about the quality of teaching are not clear enough to help teachers improve their practice. Leaders set teachers' targets to improve but these are not followed up to ensure that matters improve quickly. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher plan to work with their colleagues to support improvements but teaching is not improving quickly enough to help pupils make better progress.

Leaders track the progress of pupils more carefully and teachers are increasingly being held to account. However, most teachers do not make consistent use of this assessment information accurately enough to plan activities that extend learning. Although meetings are held to discuss pupils' progress and strategies to speed progress are now identified, this work is too recent to have had a significant impact. Additionally, some targets that are set for pupils are not high enough.

The recently appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good understanding of what is necessary to ensure that children make good progress. The roles of some leaders have not developed since the previous inspection. There are

plans to train the English and mathematics subject leaders but currently these roles are covered by the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.

Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage have begun to plan more successfully for the needs and interests of children. They encourage parents and carers to contribute to assessments which are recorded more regularly. The emphasis on observing and recording children's reactions as they take part in different play areas is helping teachers to plan activities that are closely linked to children's interests and needs. More needs to be done, however, to ensure that activities encourage boys to become more focused and engaged.

Pupils mainly have positive attitudes to learning and as a result, lessons run smoothly. Their behaviour in the playground has improved and incidents of poor behaviour have also reduced. Typically, pupils appreciate the additional play resources at lunchtime which help to ensure that they play safely with each other. Pupils say they enjoy going to the games club held in the school hall at lunchtimes, particularly table-tennis. The games club helps pupils who may find lunchtimes difficult as well as those who prefer to be indoors.

The governing body receives more regular and detailed information about the progress and attainment of pupils now. Members of the governing body have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are beginning to hold the school to account. The governing body is aware that pupils need to make accelerated progress in order to make up for weaknesses in teaching. Safeguarding checks meet statutory requirements.

The local authority has provided support and challenge for the school as detailed in its statement of action that is fit for purpose. However, the school has failed to meet most of the interim achievement targets set. Support provided by the local authority to improve practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been effective. Training for senior leaders has been helpful in ensuring accurate evaluations of lessons. Support for mathematics teaching has been successful in raising awareness and developing whole-school approaches but the quality of teaching is not good enough in this subject.

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

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Ensure pupils make at least satisfactory progress in lessons by assessing how well they are doing as they work through activities, using that information to move their learning on quickly and planning the next lesson accordingly.
- Ensure all staff use assessment information frequently, and are all held robustly to account for the part they play in improving pupils' attainment and progress, by:
 - making good use of continuous assessments in lessons and lesson plans by teachers and support staff
 - staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage making frequent and sharply focused assessments of what the children can do
 - developing the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders to focus primarily on the impact of their work
 - increasing the frequency of monitoring teaching and learning by senior leaders so that individual teachers are clear about their performance and receive the support that they need to improve their practice
 - revising the way that senior leaders track and measure pupils' achievement
 - giving higher profile to pupils' achievement in meetings of the governing body.
- Improve the management of pupils' behaviour at break times by supervising pupils more effectively and providing more for the pupils to do.