

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

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



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Mr D Andrews
Headteacher
Greenfields Community Primary School
Oxford Road
Maidstone
ME15 8DF

Dear Mr Andrews

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Greenfields Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The inspector looked at the minutes of the governing body meetings, records of coaching and mentoring for staff, and the most up to date checks on how well pupils are achieving in reading, writing and mathematics.

Context

There have been no major changes at the school since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

The senior leadership team is rapidly establishing itself as a driving force for improvement. Their regular coaching and mentoring programme for staff means that areas requiring improvement are identified and followed up quickly. The most recent checks on how well pupils are achieving show that pupils' progress in most, but not all, classes is beginning to speed up. Writing continues to be a weakness and the school is trying out a programme which encourages speaking, listening and writing through more interesting activities. Although there are many positive signs of improvement, there is still not enough focus on making sure that activities in lessons challenge all pupils to achieve as well as possible. Also, the school has been slow to tackle specific areas of underachievement such as Year 2 pupils, particularly boys, who did not do well in the phonic screening check.

The school development plan covers the areas for improvement noted in the recent inspection, and identifies appropriate actions and staff responsible for carrying them out. However, the plan is not clear enough about how success will be measured and evaluated in terms of, not just what actions the adults are taking, but what difference this will have on pupils' learning.

The governing body has played a key part in stabilising and enhancing the school's leadership. Governors are linked to the four main areas of the improvement plan and have spent time in school discussing improvement planning and progress with senior leaders. They have a range of valuable skills and are keen to increase further their understanding of the school and extend their influence and effectiveness.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- sharpen the focus of lesson monitoring to further improve the pace of learning, and check that activities challenge pupils of all abilities
- make sure that targets in the school development plan, particularly in the achievement section, are focused on pupil outcomes and are measurable at several points during the year to check pupils are making better progress
- work with the HMI and local authority to provide training and support for governors so that they increase their understanding and effectiveness in evaluating the impact of actions and holding the school to account.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school is making increasingly good use of external support provided by the local authority and partners such as an experienced school leader who is mentoring the headteacher. Staff have benefited from appropriate training courses and this is supported by the school leaders following up and building on professional development activities in school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Kent.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald

Her Majesty's Inspector