

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 311 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com



18 April 2013

Ms Linda Thomas
Headteacher
Sparrow Farm Junior School
Sparrow Farm Drive
Feltham
TW14 0DG

Dear Ms Thomas

Monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Sparrow Farm Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 18 April 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, the deputy headteacher and lower school team leader, three representatives from the governing body including the Chair, a group of Year 6 pupils and the headteacher adviser representing the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plan, information about pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and evidence from other monitoring activities. We went on a tour of the school together and visited every classroom.

Context

Since the inspection, a part-time teacher has joined the school to provide additional support for Year 5 pupils. Two new governors, including a parent governor, have been appointed. Another parent governor's time on the governing body has expired, leaving two vacancies.

Main findings

The school has acted swiftly to tackle the improvements identified in the last inspection. The improvement plan, developed by senior leaders and governors, is well structured, with actions based firmly on raising pupils' achievement and linked to clear success criteria. Timescales and systems for checking the progress of the plan are informing much sharper self-evaluation. The action plan provides a clear strategic approach for the development of literacy, including improving pupils' spelling and writing, particularly through work across the curriculum. However, it does not highlight what action is being taken to provide similar opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their numeracy skills in a range of contexts.

The use of data has significantly improved. The school now has an accurate view of achievement of all pupils in English and mathematics. This information indicates that pupils are making more rapid progress. Assessment information is being effectively used to reset pupils' achievement targets, identify any underachievement and is linked to teachers' performance. Improvements in data recording systems are ensuring it is more accessible to all staff. This is also helping teachers to better plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able. Pupils enthusiastically commented on greater challenge in lessons and that teachers are providing them with higher level work.

The headteacher, ably supported by the two senior leaders, has focused on improving the quality of teaching. They are galvanising staff who are keen to improve. A more evaluative approach to monitoring the quality of teaching is linked to whole school and targeted professional development. As result, the quality and consistency of teaching is improving. Lessons are moving at faster pace, teachers' questioning is sharper and pupils have more opportunities to work independently. Teachers' comments on pupils' work are more focused and developmental. Pupils said that this is helping them to improve and they like having opportunities to respond to comments. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Governors recognised that the minutes of their meetings lacked detail and new clerking arrangements have been put in place. These show that governors are better informed and are providing increased challenge particularly in relation to pupils' achievement. Each governor is now linked to a class and is expected to focus on aspects of the action plan when undertaking any school visit. This is deepening their knowledge of the school. However, it would be helpful to specify explicitly their roles in monitoring the school improvement plan. A planned review of governance was postponed. This should now take place as a matter of priority.

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:

- develop a strategic approach to supporting the development of numeracy across the curriculum in line with the approaches taken to support pupils' literacy

- define explicitly governors' roles in monitoring the school improvement plan
- ensure that the planned review of governance is carried out this term.

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

External support

The local authority is now providing good support to the school through a headteacher adviser. This is helping to strengthen leadership and management, and governance. The school is also benefiting from increased access to courses run by or commissioned by the local authority. The school is making effective use of training and support through the local schools' partnership.

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

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett
Her Majesty's Inspector