

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 5359
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

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Mrs Irene Smith
Headteacher
Liberty Primary
Western Road
Mitcham
Surrey
CR4 3EB

Dear Mrs Smith

Monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Liberty Primary, Merton

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, other senior leaders and two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plans and related documentation, governing body minutes and local authority notes of visit. I carried out a tour of the school with you to see the school at work.

Context

The senior leadership team has been restructured, partly to reallocate the responsibilities of the deputy headteacher who has taken a leave of absence.

Main findings

The headteacher and her senior team have responded very constructively to the recent section 5 inspection judgements. They have developed comprehensive action plans to tackle all areas of the school's work requiring improvement. Action plans have measurable success criteria and short term timescales indicating when planned actions should be complete. However, school leaders and the governing body have not targeted how long it will take to get to good; they have not developed a timeline with regular progress checks to enable incisive monitoring of the school's improvement. Planned actions such as training to improve teachers questioning skills and increased focus on extended writing have already improved teaching and accelerated pupils' progress. The school has audited the skills of teaching assistants and changed the lesson planning format to ensure they are effectively deployed by teachers. This has resulted in better targeting of teaching assistants' work which has benefitted the pupils. Subject leaders are aware of Ofsted's key findings about effective subject teaching but these have not been fully disseminated to all teachers.

School leaders are rigorous in holding teachers to account through half-termly pupil progress meetings. These meetings supplement regular observations of the quality of classroom teaching and enable leaders to sharply evaluate teaching by focusing on its impact on raising pupils' academic standards. The governing body is supportive of the school and receives regular progress reports from senior leaders. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for improvement but has no identified role in monitoring the progress of planned actions.

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, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure that governors and senior leaders work together to establish a target date for the school to be good and develop regular progress checks to measure improvement towards that date
- give governors a significant role in monitoring the school's progress to good
- ensure that all teachers are implementing Ofsted's key findings about effective subject teaching.

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

External support

The school has been supported strongly by the local authority. Local authority consultants and an advanced skills teacher have been working closely with teaching

staff to improve their practice and moderate their assessments. The school has also worked closely with the local authority attendance team. This has improved pupils' attendance to be in line with that found nationally.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Merton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector