

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

16 May 2013

Mr Peter Heath
Headteacher
Blakenall Heath Junior School
Field Road
Walsall
WS3 3JF

Dear Mr Heath

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Blakenall Heath Junior School, Walsall

Following my visit to your school on 16 May 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, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, and a local authority representative. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including senior leaders' monitoring records, information about pupils' progress, and local authority visit notes. HMI visited some classrooms with the headteacher, to review learning activities for different groups of pupils and to talk to pupils about their work.

Context

One class teacher left at the end of the spring term. One class teacher is currently on family leave.

Main findings

The revised school improvement plan includes the actions that will be taken in response to the issues raised in the recent inspection. It does not indicate who will check that the actions in the plan are helping to raise pupils' achievement.

Senior leaders' feedback to teachers following observations of lessons is helpful. They identify specific actions teachers need to take to help different groups of pupils make faster progress. However, senior leaders do not make sure that all teachers implement these actions quickly enough. For instance, last term senior leaders identified that the activities for lower-ability pupils were not always suitable. These pupils are still being given the same work as their classmates without the resources to help them. Consequently, they do not always make enough progress.

Teachers are getting better at marking pupils' work. They are correcting errors, and telling pupils what they need to do to make their work even better the next time. They are also giving pupils the time to respond to their comments. This is helping pupils to improve their writing and mathematics work.

As a result of recent local authority training, governors are starting to ask challenging questions about the progress that pupils make in comparison to pupils nationally. Governors are not checking for themselves that the senior leaders' actions are making enough of a difference to pupils' learning.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that with support from the local authority further action is taken to:

- ensure the school improvement plan clearly states who will check that the actions in the plan are helping to raise pupils' achievement
- make sure senior leaders check that all teachers implement swiftly the specific actions that have been identified to help different groups of pupils make better progress
- strengthen the work of the governing body so that they are able to check more carefully that senior leaders' actions are making enough of a difference to pupils' learning.

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

External support

The school's advisor has provided senior leaders with helpful advice. Her recommendations for helping the school to become a good school are appropriate and leading to gradual improvement in the quality of teaching, in some classes. The headteacher has arranged for a number of independent consultants to work with staff. This is giving staff the opportunity to improve their practice. This work is recent and the impact has yet to be seen.

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

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector