

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

4 October 2013

Mrs Barbara Abbey
Gorringe Park Primary School
Sandy Lane
Mitcham
Surrey CR4 2YA

Dear Mrs Abbey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gorringe Park Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors responsible are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the school development plan clearly identifies the expected progress of different groups of pupils at each checkpoint
- ensure that all governors understand school data more precisely, so that they can provide further challenge to school leaders about the quality of teaching and its impact on the achievement of all pupils.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' books and a range of other documentation. I visited classes with you in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Context

Since the last inspection two new senior leaders and five teachers have been appointed. The school is continuing to expand the number of pupils on roll. A new Chair of the Governing Body has been elected.

Main findings

A strong sense of purpose is driving improvement across all levels of the school. The newly extended leadership team has clearly conveyed the message about taking robust actions in relation to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Crucially, systems for analysing achievement data have been improved. Class teachers and middle managers now have clearer, more readily available information about different pupils' starting points. They are using this to plan activities which meet the needs of all learners more effectively.

Leaders have made it their first priority to secure improvements in teaching. The post-Ofsted action plan details actions to improve teaching. These have already had a noticeable impact. For example, a clearer marking policy has ensured that teachers are using the same approach across the school to give pupils feedback about how well they are doing. Pupils are responding in red pen, making improvements and developing their skills more securely. A whole-school focus on the quality of handwriting and presentation is leading to improvements in pupils' work. A wider range of written texts is being used to model good writing. Pupils in a Year 2 class talked excitedly about the book that they had recently read in class. This was linked to a task which focused well on using imaginative vocabulary, enabling pupils to make good gains in their written skills.

Teachers have benefitted from additional mentoring and regular opportunities to share their practice. Weekly checks by senior and middle leaders identify good practice and where improvements need to be made. All teachers have been observed since the beginning of term. Where there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching, there are now rigorous processes in place to follow up rapidly and check that improvements have been made. Support and training is being provided to all teachers, through senior leadership mentoring, partnership with another local school

and from local authority consultants. The proportion of good or better teaching is rising as a result of this more strategic approach.

Expectations have been raised across the school and there is a shared view amongst staff that pupils should be making better than expected progress, particularly those who have underachieved in the past. More regular assessment checkpoints are in place for teachers to enter assessment data. However, expectations of improved achievement over time are not referenced clearly enough in the school development plan, so that the progress of different groups of pupils can be fully reviewed at each checkpoint.

Governors have recognised the need to make quick changes to ensure that they are holding leaders more robustly to account. Governors have commissioned an external review of governance, scheduled to take place in late October. They are beginning to ask more challenging questions of school leaders about the achievement of pupils at the school and are focusing more sharply on the quality of teaching across year groups. Governors have received training in analysing data relating to pupils' achievement, but not all have a precise enough understanding of how to use this to fully evaluate the impact of teaching over time on different groups of pupils.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided a range of support to the school, more recently providing increased levels to help tackle areas for improvement. Consultants have been commissioned to provide support for teachers and leaders at the school to improve the teaching of literacy and mathematics. In addition, further support is planned to review and strengthen moderation processes, to ensure that pupils' achievement is robustly and accurately assessed over time. The local authority has provided governor training and brokered peer support for the headteacher, together with opportunities for teachers to see good practice in partner schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Russell Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector