

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5359  
**Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

15 October 2013

Louisa Dormer  
Headteacher  
Bushy Hill Junior School  
Sheeplands Avenue  
Merrow  
Guildford  
GU1 2SG

Dear Mrs Dormer

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bushy Hill Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- strengthen all senior and middle leaders' skills in leading and monitoring improvements in the teaching of mathematics, reading and writing
- implement an appropriate phonics programme as soon as possible.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, members of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and monitoring documents were evaluated. I met staff and went on a tour of the school to visit all classes in Years 3, 5 and 6.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection two teachers have left the school. A new coordinator for special educational needs and a newly qualified teacher have been appointed. There have been a number of changes within the Governing Body, including the appointment of a new Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors.

## **Main findings**

Before the section 5 inspection in July the headteacher had already implemented a more rigorous system for managing teachers' performance. Swift and effective action has now followed to ensure that teachers' targets are sufficiently challenging and linked to pupils' progress. Weak performance has been tackled decisively, resulting in a much greater sense of accountability for all staff. The school's action plan focuses sharply on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The plan shows what success will look like and includes ambitious but achievable deadlines for improvements. Nevertheless, the plan does not outline sufficiently clearly how each senior leader will lead and evaluate improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.

The headteacher is monitoring teachers' planning more carefully. She has shrewdly identified that lesson planning for mathematics is often over-complicated with too many activities for pupils to complete. Teachers consequently lose sight of the main aim of the lesson and lower attaining pupils and also more-able pupils do not make enough gains in their learning. Senior leaders and an advisor from the local authority are now working together to ensure that mathematics teaching is focused more simply and precisely on what pupils need to learn and practise.

The headteacher has introduced a more rigorous scrutiny of pupils' progress: formal meetings are being held more frequently to discuss pupils' results and identify those making insufficient progress. The headteacher has identified that less-able pupils and those pupils eligible for free school meals are not making enough progress to catch up with their peers. As a result, the headteacher has made sure that teachers take more responsibility for recording, tracking and evaluating the achievement of individual pupils in their own classes.

School leaders have sensibly implemented regular handwriting practice, reading and spelling activities. School leaders are in the process of reviewing the range of books available in the school and pupils are encouraged to read every day. During the monitoring inspection visit several pupils were attending extra one-to-one reading sessions to support basic skills and comprehension. However, there is no systematic phonics programme in place to support pupils' work on letters and sounds. With the support of the local authority, school leaders are currently investigating a range of programmes in order to select the system best suited to pupils' needs.

Teachers are encouraging pupils to settle to independent work more quickly in lessons. They are now spending less time repeating instructions and giving unnecessarily lengthy explanations. 'Talk to your partner' is having a noticeably positive impact on pupils' thinking skills and more pupils participate confidently in lessons, rather than wait to begin tasks. However, not all teachers ensure that pupils use their time wisely: during the monitoring inspection visit some pupils had completed work but did not know what to do next. These pupils were not in the habit of using the available resources and teachers were not aware that the pace of their learning had slowed.

There are some encouraging signs that teachers are improving pupils' writing through better marking, in line with the school policy. Some teachers give pupils editing activities and follow-up tasks to improve their work, including punctuation and spelling practice. However, this approach is not consistent across the school. Teachers include 'next steps' in their written marking but not all ensure that pupils act promptly upon the advice at the crucial point of learning.

Governors have an astute understanding of the areas for improvement in the school. They have wisely restructured their roles and responsibilities in line with the school action plan. Governors now work more closely with the school on a day-to-day basis. As a result, they ask increasingly challenging questions and insist that school leaders provide reliable proof that new approaches are having a positive impact on teaching and pupils' achievement.

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**

Leaders are making good use of the full range of support provided by the local authority. They have formed useful partnerships with other schools, assisting with improvements in teaching and leadership. The headteacher benefits from the school improvement partner's sound advice and challenge. Local authority specialist advisors have also worked effectively with school leaders to plan improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**