

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 01173115323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroun.com



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Mr Timothy Rome
Headteacher
Woodcote Primary School
Dunsfold Rise
Coulsdon
Surrey
CR5 2ED

Dear Mr Rome

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodcote Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 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.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you and the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, six members of the governing body and the school improvement partner, representing the local authority. I toured the school with you and scrutinised a range of documents including action plans, pupil progress data, school monitoring evaluations, and professional development plans.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been no substantial changes to staffing. Currently, there is one long-term supply teacher with classroom responsibility. Three parent governors joined the governing body and a new Chair of the Governing Body took up post following the previous inspection.

Main findings

Following the section 5 inspection, you, and your senior leadership team have drawn up a very detailed action plan which covers all the areas identified for improvement, with the exception of governance. The plan is further underpinned by subject leaders action plans for improving their areas of responsibility. However, arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the action plan are unclear. There is also a lack of precision about success criteria and intended outcomes, for instance in respect of pupils' attainment and the progress that is expected of them. This will make it difficult to monitor the impact of the plan and hold staff to account.

Rigorous review of school data is helping senior leaders to gain a clear picture of how well pupils are learning, and responding where data show that pupils' progress is stalling or slowing down. By analysing the data for each class, you are holding teachers to account through robust discussions about pupils' achievement.

School leaders have a secure understanding of where teaching is weakest. For example, you are aware of the need to review provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly the outdoor areas. You have clearly explained to teachers what is expected of them and provided appropriately timed training to help them improve. The school's monitoring records indicate pupils' are clearer as to what they are going to learn in lessons and lessons are now moving at a brisker pace. Teachers across the school are working together to plan lessons and observe good practice. Consequently, this is leading to better teaching. However, teachers have not all had the opportunity to observe good and outstanding practice, particularly in relation to promoting the achievement of vulnerable pupils.

The recommended external review of the governing body has yet to be completed, although a date for this review has now been set. Members of the governing body are keen to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. Governors are supportive but do not yet play a strong enough part in shaping and driving improvement.

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, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- sharpen the improvement plan to explicitly define governors' roles in monitoring the school development plan More precise success criteria related to pupil outcomes is required.
- in liaison with the local authority locate and learn from primary schools with expertise in promoting the achievement of vulnerable pupils
- review and improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

You and the senior leadership team are highly receptive to the valuable support provided by the local authority. You have carefully thought about how the school can benefit from this partnership work and have agreed a programme of intervention that will support the school in tackling weaknesses in teaching by providing better training for staff and through establishing links with a local teaching school.

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

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector