

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

3 December 2013

Ms Jane Bright
Headteacher
Temple Mill Primary School
Cliffe Road
Rochester
ME2 3NL

Dear Ms Bright

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Temple Mill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 December 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- make sure that teachers' judgements about pupils' attainment and progress are accurate
- develop teachers' skills and make sure that they put what they learn into practice regularly so that standards rise quickly and pupils who are underachieving catch up
- seek an external review of governance to help improve how effectively the governing body holds leaders accountable for improving the school.

Evidence

During the visit, I had meetings with you and your senior leadership team, four members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We walked around the classrooms and I looked at a range of documents that you provided for me which included the school's self-evaluation and information about the progress that pupils make in different classes and subjects.

Context

Since my last visit to the school in June there have been changes of staff and to the governing body. Four permanent teachers and one temporary teacher have left. The deputy headteacher is now teaching for three days every week in Year 3. The assistant headteacher has been moved from Year 1 to teach every morning in Year 2. The Year 1 class is being taught by a teaching assistant until the school is able to recruit a permanent teacher. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has joined the senior leadership team. The chair of the achievement and standards committee has resigned and another governor has assumed this role. There is a new chair of the finance committee. One parent governor and two community governors have joined the governing body. There is a vacancy for a local authority governor.

Main findings

Standards are not improving and remain too low. Since the school was inspected in November 2012, standards in Year 2 and Year 6 have fallen and are significantly below average. Although more pupils reached the standards expected in the Year 1 phonics screening checks and there was a small rise in standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6, pupils are not making enough progress to close gaps in their understanding. Too many pupils are underachieving. Boys, pupils who are eligible for pupil premium, more able pupils and those identified with special educational needs at school action all made significantly less progress than similar pupils nationally. The school's own information shows that the progress that pupils make in different subject and classes is too variable.

The governing body has considered the skills of current governors and recently recruited some new governors with the relevant skills that are necessary to govern more effectively. Governors have undertaken appropriate training and are beginning to ask questions of school leaders. However, they have only recently started to probe the clarity and accuracy of the information they are given and look in more detail at the performance of different groups of pupils. They have not yet assured themselves that the targets set are sufficiently challenging to help all pupils make faster progress, close gaps with pupils nationally and raise standards quickly enough.

The school's self-evaluation does not provide governors with an accurate picture of the school's performance and how much more needs to be done. Information is not precise enough and does not accurately reflect the recently published school performance information. Differences in the information have not been spotted and corrected by leaders and show that teachers are not judging how well pupils are achieving accurately. Leaders know this is an issue but have not given teachers enough regular support and coaching to help put this right and improve their everyday classroom practice. It is unclear how some of the judgements about pupil progress in the first term of this year have been made. Consequently, it is difficult for governors and senior leaders to know if they match their expectations.

Senior leaders know that the school has not improved and that information about pupils' progress is not reliable. The response to these weaknesses has been too slow. Only recently have arrangements to manage teachers' performance been amended so that actions can be taken more quickly when necessary. Teachers have been set targets for improving the progress of pupils in their class but targets are not yet in place so that expectations of teaching assistants are clear.

Low standards and the lack of improvement is a concern and the school is unlikely to be judged to be good at its next section 5 inspection. As I was unable to meet with the full governing body I will return to the school as soon as possible to do so.

External support

The impact of external support on improving achievement and strengthening leadership has been limited. Leadership and governance are not developed well enough for the school to improve without continued support. Support from the National Leader of Education (NLE) has encouraged senior leaders to begin to challenge teaching where improvements need to be made and given opportunities to share best practice. Additional support from the local authority Early Years adviser has been planned but not yet started. The local authority has concerns about the lack of improvement and identified that continued support is needed. The governing body has agreed to fund continued support from the NLE in the spring but neither the local authority nor governing body have held leaders accountable well enough for the lack of progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector