

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 5323
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

15 January 2014

Annie Gunthorpe
Headteacher
Westover Primary School
Westover Road
Portsmouth
PO3 6NS

Dear Ms Gunthorpe

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Westover Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2014, 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 October 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:

- ensure that weaknesses in teaching are tackled through effective training and development
- make sure that phase and subject leaders have clear understanding of what they need to do and how they will be held to account for their work.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. Other documents were scrutinised, including a recent monitoring report from the local authority and evidence of school leaders' monitoring of teaching. We went on a tour

of the school and made short visits to all classes to observe teaching, talk to pupils and look at their work.

Context

Since the last inspection in October two teachers have left the school. One member of staff is currently on long-term absence.

Main findings

Following the inspection school leaders responded quickly and with determination to improve less than good teaching. Teachers are in no doubt about how expectations have been raised. There has been some restructuring of classes and better deployment of teachers. Plans to improve the school are focused on the right areas and include a month by month monitoring outline. However, the action plan does not identify how middle leaders will be responsible for improving teaching and pupils' progress. It is also not clear how school leaders will follow up weaknesses in teaching with appropriate training and support.

Since the inspection the headteacher and deputy headteacher have focused on monitoring teaching more frequently. Her Majesty's Inspector saw comprehensive records of unannounced visits to lessons, formal observations, scrutinies of teachers' planning, evaluations of pupils' work and analyses of pupils' results. As a consequence, senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher and each pupil extremely well.

The headteacher expects to see strong levels of concentration from pupils and no time wasted. This was seen in most lessons during the monitoring inspection visit. In Year 1 pupils enthusiastically demonstrated their story maps and storytelling skills. The pupils were repeating sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structures and showed obvious delight in expressing themselves. Some patient and thorough teaching was also noted in Year 6, including clear explanations from the teacher and effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils' understanding of calculating angles.

However, it is less clear what steps are being taken to develop teachers' skills and sustain overall improvements in teaching. Teachers receive individual feedback following lesson observations but school leaders do not use their general findings to draw up a training plan. Teachers know what they need to improve but are not shown enough inspiring examples of good teaching and achievement. Middle leaders have only just started taking responsibility for observing teaching in their areas and phases and they are not being held accountable for driving improvements.

Current progress data show improvements in writing. Pupil progress meetings happen regularly and the school has increased the number of times they meet with parents to discuss progress. However, there have been some inaccuracies in teachers' assessments when compared with national tests. It is essential that

teachers' assessments are validated in order to track progress accurately and set ambitious targets.

School leaders are now focusing sharply on the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and current data show that eligible pupils are catching up and making better progress now. School leaders have rightly identified that the current group of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding have varied needs and abilities: some eligible pupils need extra support to achieve good attendance, some are more-able and some pupils have complex additional needs. Class teachers highlight these pupils in their planning and are held responsible for ensuring that they receive the right support and extra help. School leaders and governors have improved the way that they report on the progress of the group of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and how the funding is spent. Reporting now shows a closer link between the money spent on additional help and its impact on pupils' achievement.

An external review of governance has not taken place yet, but has been commissioned from Hampshire Local Authority. The governing body has been strengthened with two new members, including one from a local Teaching Schools Alliance, providing a greater range of skills and professional experience. Governors have increased their understanding of data and the use of the pupil premium, but there is further training needed to enable them to measure and evaluate rates of progress. Governors have also realised that they have to be more assertive and direct about holding senior and middle leaders to account for strategic planning and reporting.

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 school benefits from support from a local authority education improvement officer who has conducted a monitoring review and provided guidance with the school's action plan. There are further plans in place to support the school with standardising teachers' assessments and improving the effectiveness of leadership at all levels. The headteacher has made a useful link with a good school as part of a local schools' partnership. The school would also benefit from a coaching relationship with effective phase and subject leaders in a good or outstanding school in a similar context.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector