

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

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Julie Wood
Headteacher
Bidbury Junior School
Fraser Road
Bedhampton
Havant
PO9 3EF

Dear Miss Wood

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bidbury Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 17 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 September 2014. 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 all teachers demonstrate consistently high expectations and that they help pupils to establish good working habits and sustain positive attitudes to learning.

Evidence

During the visit meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, three members of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. I also met with a group of six pupils taken from all year groups. We went on a tour of the school to

observe teaching in all classes and I evaluated a sample of pupils' work. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection one member of staff has left the school. A teacher has been appointed on a temporary contract for two terms. There are currently two newly qualified teachers.

Main findings

Governors and the local authority agree that school leaders are acting more decisively since the inspection in September. Senior leaders have more time to perform their roles and are working more purposefully as a team. Immediate steps have been taken to tackle weaknesses in teaching. Senior leaders' astute analysis of teachers' strengths and weaknesses form the basis of regular staff training and professional development. Formal coaching partnerships have been set up so that teachers can share good practice and learn from each other. Teachers welcome feedback on their work and are increasingly determined to improve.

The school action plan focuses clearly on the areas for improvement and includes appropriate timescales. Senior leaders have shared the plan with staff and everyone's roles and responsibilities are distinctly identified. However, the action plan does not show explicitly how improvements to teaching and leadership will be measured by the impact on pupils' results.

School leaders have identified that pupils in most year groups are now making more progress in reading and mathematics as a result of better teaching and some highly effective programmes of extra help. Pupils told Her Majesty's Inspector that teaching in mathematics had improved because they were not all having to complete the same tasks and learn at the same pace. The monitoring inspection confirmed school leaders' view that pupils are working with greater concentration. Better questioning is beginning to challenge most pupils. Pupils contribute usefully in discussions and listen attentively when sharing ideas with a partner. However, pupils do not always respond confidently to teachers' questions. They do not receive enough guidance about how to explain their ideas clearly and fluently. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and provide helpful advice and reminders. However, pupils are not given time to follow up their teachers' comments and make improvements to their work. Most teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are aiming for in every lesson and the steps they need to take to succeed. In some classes, pupils are diligent, highly motivated and seek out further challenges. However, some lessons do not take enough account of what pupils already know and are not linked in a logical sequence. In these cases, pupils' learning becomes disjointed, they become uncertain about the point of the work and as a consequence they achieve less. A few

pupils are easily distracted and are not being helped to sustain their motivation and to acquire positive learning habits.

Governors continue to provide the school with meticulous support and resolute challenge. Since the inspection, governors have updated their training using the Ofsted guidance. They have also created their own monitoring plan, linked with the school action plan. Governors now meet more frequently with the headteacher to discuss progress and have provided the headteacher with strong support when she has had to tackle weaker teaching. Governors express greater confidence in the strengthened and more settled school team, taking time to praise the good work of staff and 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 school was receiving high priority support from the local authority before the inspection. A primary phase inspector is working closely with the school and has provided helpful guidance for senior leaders with the creation of the action plan. She has also provided advisory support and training with the teaching of mathematics and English. The headteacher is also benefiting from a coaching partnership with a headteacher from an outstanding school.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector