

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 5307
Direct email: rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com

23 January 2014

Mrs Sue Marshall
Headteacher
Eastrop Infant School
Eastrop
Highworth
Swindon
SN6 7AP

Dear Mrs Marshall

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Eastrop Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 November 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 the school action plan so that activities undertaken to improve the school are measured against more clearly defined success criteria
- develop the plans for governors to work with school leaders to ensure a deeper understanding of the impact of the work of the school particularly in terms of the quality of teaching and the achievement by pupils
- ensure that the planned support for the school from external providers develop robust reviews of the school's progress and clear guidance for further improvement with a focus on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils

- ensure staff and governors are familiar with the findings of the Ofsted survey reports *Getting to good – How headteachers achieve success* and *School governance – Learning from the best* and how they can be used to support the school's work in improving teaching and raising standards.

Evidence

During the visit meetings were held with you and the assistant headteachers, three members of the governing body including the Chair and the school improvement partner working with the school, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan and cycle of monitoring procedures were considered in our discussions which included the review of the tracking system for pupils' progress. We also discussed the system for the monitoring of teaching and the planned cycle of pupil progress meetings. A range of pupils' books were also scrutinised.

Main findings

The school's development plan is effectively linked to the recommendations in the inspection report. There are clear actions to be developed, key personnel identified, resources required, monitoring and evaluation. However, although there are clear milestones to review the impact of improvement work, these are not sharply focused on clearly defined and, where appropriate, measureable outcomes linked to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

Senior leaders have worked well to develop the system for tracking pupils' progress. This is already providing useful data on the achievement of groups of pupils and enabling the development of appropriate support for those who are in danger of underachieving. The work on improving the teaching of phonics with teachers and teaching assistants is well planned and is beginning to show some impact on outcomes. The marking system has been reviewed and a new policy developed. This involves the pupils in reviewing their work more directly and time is built in to lessons to enable them to respond to teachers' comments on what they need to do to improve. Pupils' books evaluated during the inspection show some effective marking by teachers and responses by pupils in Year 2.

Governors have developed plans to improve their role with the creation of a working group to review the school's action plan. This group meets with senior leaders regularly to monitor and evaluate progress made against the action plan. Furthermore, a review of the work of the governing body has been commissioned from the local authority and this has begun. The commitment of governors and senior leaders to improve the school is clear and there are strong working relationships at all levels. Groups of governors are working on particular aspects of the action plan, for example the analysis of data, but there is scope to develop

understanding and challenge further through closer work with senior leaders on the impact of teaching and the monitoring of 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

The school has sought an appropriate range of support from external providers since the inspection. This includes the continuing support from the school's improvement partner, joining the local authority's support programme for schools judged as requiring improvement, attendance at an Ofsted 'Better mathematics' conference and visits to other schools to consider effective practice. In addition, the governing body has commissioned a review of its work led by the local authority's governor services. It will be important to ensure that this range of external support remains sharply focused on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the DfE Academies Advisers Unit and the Director of Children's Services for Swindon.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner
Her Majesty's Inspector