

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
Email: rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com



22 January 2014

Amanda Mullett
Executive Headteacher
Wildground Junior School
Armitage Avenue
Southampton
SO45 4LG

Dear Ms Mullett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wildground Junior 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. 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 improvements in teaching are evaluated by their impact on all pupils' progress.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the head of school, the leader for mathematics, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan, recent information about pupils' progress and other documents related to improving teaching were evaluated. I made brief visits to all classes, accompanied by the Executive Headteacher and the Head of School.

Context

At the time of the monitoring inspection one teacher was on maternity leave. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed on a temporary contract.

Main findings

Before the section 5 inspection, the executive headteacher and head of school had identified that teaching and pupils' progress needed to improve significantly and had begun to implement some necessary changes. Since the inspection the pace of improvement has accelerated and school leaders are acting with even more energy and determination. An increased sense of purpose is tangible. One school leader commented, 'there is a sense of trust' and 'there is no let-up'. This was confirmed during the monitoring inspection. Teachers were challenging pupils, stimulating their excitement and encouraging them to be more productive in lessons. For example, pupils were so engrossed in moving up to the next stage in a mathematics lesson that they audibly groaned when reminded that it was time to pack up for lunch.

The action plan to improve the school is thorough and detailed. It shows leaders' and teachers' responsibilities, what the new approaches will look like and realistic timescales. However it is not clear how improvements to teaching will be evaluated in terms of their impact on pupils' achievement.

Senior leaders have introduced 'non-negotiable' principles that need to be seen in every lesson. Teachers use 'exit and entrance passes' to check pupils' previous learning and all pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves. 'Comfort, challenge, danger' tasks help pupils practise and consolidate skills, try something more difficult or take a risk and attempt tasks that really make them think. Pupils are routinely directed to make good use of extra resources and well-designed displays in classrooms to support their learning.

Teachers have received training in how to organise effective guided reading lessons. Pupils now read every day and work in flexible groups according to ability. Teachers are beginning to tailor appropriate tasks to each group and better reading habits are starting to develop.

The executive headteacher and head of school spend a significant amount of time visiting lessons and observing teaching. The head of school leads a coaching programme for teachers and provides intensive support and guidance. School leaders can point to specific improvements in the work of individual teachers. However, more needs to be done to measure this success in terms of the impact on pupils' progress, particularly that of girls and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

Middle leaders are beginning to take on more responsibility for improving overall standards in the school. The coordinator for special educational needs has reviewed

the skills and work of the teaching assistants and ensured that they have appropriate training. The leader for mathematics has conducted a scrutiny of pupils' mathematics work and teachers' marking, which resulted in a review of the school's marking policy. Teachers' marking is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress and the quality of their presentation and handwriting, although it is not yet consistently good.

At the time of the inspection the governing body had been in place for five days. An external review has been completed and an astute and ambitious board of governors is now in a strong position to drive improvements in the school. They have thoroughly audited their skills and experience and recruited new governors with a range of professional backgrounds and experience. Governors worked closely with school leaders and the local authority leadership learning partner to support the creation of a detailed and focused action plan. Governors possess an accurate evaluation of the school's progress data and demonstrate a shrewd analysis of the school's work to improve teaching. Governors are confident in the leadership of the school and ensure that school leaders remain focused on the key areas for improvement.

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

Before the inspection the local authority had already judged the school to be a high priority for support and have continued to provide useful advice and challenge. The leadership learning partner and the district manager have guided school leaders with the action plan. School leaders have selected relevant advisory support discerningly, in order to target the areas most in need, such as English and mathematics. The school would benefit from links with good and outstanding schools in similar settings, in order to provide teachers with models of good and outstanding teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector