

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



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Headteacher
Wavendon Gate School
Gregories Drive
Milton Keynes
MK7 7HL

Dear Mr Cox

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wavendon Gate School

Following my visit to your school on 23 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 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, a member the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement action plans were evaluated. Brief visits were made to all classrooms.

Context

There have been several staff changes at the school since the section 5 inspection in November 2013.

Main findings

Areas for improvement identified at the last inspection are being tackled effectively, though the momentum for change would now benefit from an injection of pace.

Pupils' behaviour has improved. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calmer. Pupils play energetically but conduct themselves in school in an appropriate manner. Some specific concerns about poor behaviour and attitudes to learning in some classes are being addressed effectively through improvements in the quality of teaching.

A more systematic approach to teaching phonics (the sounds letters and their combinations make) across the school is helping to improve pupils' reading and writing. You are correctly focusing on raising the quality of writing especially, in Years 2 and 3. Mathematics too is receiving closer scrutiny. A focus on assessment of pupils' learning and ensuring that pupils of all abilities are challenged adequately in lessons are steps in the right direction. The main challenge for you now, in these areas, is to ensure that there is a consistency of approach by teachers across the school and that you quickly establish if the changes you have made are having the desired effect of raising pupils' achievements.

You have managed staff changes effectively and used expertise, where it is needed to bring continuity for pupils. Procedures for monitoring teaching have improved and now include more unannounced lesson observations by senior leaders. Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and information about pupils' progress are not yet as 'sharply' coordinated as they could be in order to provide a very clear and detailed picture of how the school is improving.

The Governing Body has increased its numbers and successfully broadened its expertise. It is in a better position to challenge and support the school, though it is not yet undertaking enough activities to gather its own first-hand knowledge of how the school is doing.

The school improvement plan, while covering all the areas that require improvement, is not as clear as it could be in identifying in detail what needs to be done, by when and by whom. It lacks specific sharp, short and medium term targets.

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

External support from consultants and the local authority are helping to move the school forward but the impact of support has yet to be established in the medium and longer term.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Milton Keynes and as below.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl

Her Majesty's Inspector