

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

5 February 2014

Mrs J Hammond
Headteacher
Busill Jones Primary School
Ashley Road
Bloxwich
Walsall
West Midlands
WS3 2QF

Dear Mrs Hammond

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Busill Jones Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 54 February 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. The school should take further action to:

- check more rigorously the impact agreed procedures for marking are having on speeding up the progress of different groups of pupils.
- use information about the progress of different groups of pupils, including that obtained from scrutiny of books, to focus lesson observations more closely on closing gaps in achievement.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, five members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school development plan and Early Years Foundation Stage action plan were evaluated. Other documents were examined, including information about pupils' current achievement. Short visits were made to classrooms to talk to pupils about their learning as well as to look at the work in their books.

Context

Two teachers, both in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are currently absent. The school anticipates this will be for some time and has produced an action plan to ensure children continue to make good progress, as was identified at the last inspection.

Main findings

Following the last inspection, you and other leaders acted swiftly to amend existing action plans. This has ensured a sharp focus on the areas for improvement identified at that time. You use these plans well to keep track of actions taken and the impact they are having. For some actions, such as improving the quality of teaching, you have set measures of success that are too broad, so you find it difficult to say at any given point, precisely whether the school is on track to achieve its long term goals.

You have trained teachers to make better use of information about pupils' achievement to set challenging work. As a result, teachers expect more of pupils and help them reach higher levels in their work. This is why pupils' progress has improved in many classes. However, some pupils are still not making good progress in some subjects, because teachers do not always pitch the level of challenge accurately. Pupils' books showed that some able mathematicians spend too long repeating work they can already do. Some pupils who struggle with writing are not making good progress because they have undemanding tasks, such as cutting out words and pictures, instead of using this time to practise language skills.

Additional adults, who work alongside teachers, have been given advice on how to use their time more effectively to support learning. During the short visits made to classrooms, all adults were well focused on supporting learning. Some teachers report an improvement in pupils' recall of number facts as a result of this sharper focus.

Since the last inspection, teachers have become more confident in following the agreed procedures for marking pupils' work. They now regularly give pupils guidance

on how to improve. Teachers and pupils know these as 'next steps'. These next steps are most effective when they are precise and are closely linked to errors in the work or difficulties experienced by a pupil. Pupils' progress is further accelerated when teachers expect the improvement to be practised straight away, then check that pupils can apply these new skills in the future. Nevertheless, marking in some books lacks these strong features, so is having limited impact on pupils' progress.

You and your deputy headteacher visit classrooms frequently to check the quality of teaching. These observations form the basis of your judgements of the effectiveness of individual teachers. You do not make sufficient use of the work in pupils' books to build a picture of the impact of teaching upon learning over longer periods of time to ensure these judgements are accurate. You and other leaders use a timetable to ensure you regularly look at pupils' books to identify what is working well and what needs to be developed. These checks do not focus sharply enough on evidence of progress made by pupils. Therefore, you miss opportunities to give teachers precise advice on how to improve the learning of particular pupils. The interval between checks is too long, so concerns are not followed up quickly enough to drive rapid improvement. This has resulted in a steady rate of improvement in teaching, rather than a rapid one.

Governors have grown in confidence and so are now much better at challenging you about what is working well and whether pupils' are making better progress. They are reflective and have actively looked for ways to improve, including organising training to help them understand achievement information. They share your ambition for pupils at this school and are committed to success.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. You have agreed to provide HMI with termly achievement updates and copies of your headteacher's report to each meeting of the governing body.

External support

The light touch support given to the school by the local authority has enabled you to demonstrate that improvements made before the last inspection are being sustained. The local authority will continue to challenge you to show this through half-termly Progress Review Group meetings. You are being well supported by the partnership with an outstanding school. Opportunities for teachers to observe good or better teaching have contributed to improvements in pupils' progress. Support for subject leaders has strengthened the capacity of leadership to build on the improvements made to date.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes

Her Majesty's Inspector