

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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Mrs Jennifer Cruse and Mrs Sally Simpson
Executive Headteacher and Head of School
Parkland Infant School
Brassey Avenue
Eastbourne
BN22 9QJ

Dear Mrs Cruse and Mrs Simpson

Requires improvement: Second monitoring inspection visit to Parkland Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 both made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are now taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- agree actions with teachers following lesson observations and record these on the feedback form.
- ensure that the agreed action points are followed up at subsequent observations.
- provide information to the governing body on the outcomes of all checks made on teaching so that governors have a clear understanding of the overall quality of teaching.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with both of you and the seconded deputy headteacher. I also met with five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last monitoring visit. I spoke to the external consultant supporting the school by telephone.

I evaluated the new school development plan in advance of the monitoring visit. During the day, I visited a mathematics lesson in Year 2 and a phonics session in one of the Reception classes. I scrutinised various pieces of documentation including records of the recent checks made on teaching and reports from external consultants working with the school.

Context

The substantive headteacher has been on long-term sick leave since my last visit in October. To ensure that the school could continue to run smoothly, the local authority brokered support from the headteacher of Pashley Down Infant School. She is acting as Executive Headteacher of Parkland Infants. The head of school and acting deputy headteacher have been seconded from Parkland Junior School.

Main findings

The executive headteacher, head of school and seconded deputy headteacher work together as a strong team and there is a sense of urgency in their drive to improve the school. Since the previous monitoring visit in October, they have completely rewritten the school's development plan. The new plan is sharply focused on tackling the weaknesses identified by inspectors in July. The new senior team has also analysed information on pupils' progress and has found some anomalies and inaccuracies. They have acted swiftly to put training in place to improve teachers' skills in assessment. They have also introduced new systems and processes that enable pupils' progress to be tracked closely and have increased the rigour of meetings with teachers to discuss any pupil who may be at risk of underachievement. All this is helping to make up the lost ground and get the school back on track to be judged 'good' at its next inspection.

Senior leaders visit lessons regularly and check teachers' planning and pupils' workbooks. They give clear feedback to teachers about what they need to do to improve, but they do not prioritise actions or agree a timescale for the changes. At present, they do not collate the information from all the checks on the quality of teaching to provide an overview of each teacher's strengths and areas for development.

The governing body is increasingly effective. Senior leaders now provide clear, frank and detailed reports on pupils' progress to governors. Bespoke training provided by the local authority has helped governors to ask the right questions in meetings. Governors have also planned a series of visits so that they can see for themselves how the school is progressing.

HMI will visit the school in the summer term to review progress and will provide further support and challenge, as necessary.

External support

The link with Pashley Down Infant School has already brought many benefits to the school, enabling teachers and governors at Parkland Infants to work with colleagues and share good practice in another setting.

The leadership support brokered by the local authority has been vital in maintaining stability and increasing the school's capacity to improve. The local authority has also provided useful training for the governing body and has commissioned a programme of support for teachers from a team of external consultants. The effectiveness of this support programme would be enhanced if the external consultants planned their work closely with school leaders and provided written reports that were clear and evaluative.

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

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles

Her Majesty's Inspector