

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



11 February 2014

Mrs Philippa Otton
Laburnum Grove Junior School, Bognor Regis
Laburnum Grove
Bognor Regis
PO22 9HT

Dear Mrs Otton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Laburnum Grove Junior School, Bognor Regis

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The first monitoring inspection took place in September 2013.

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 all senior leaders are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching
- take urgent steps to improve handwriting for all pupils, but particularly those in Years 3 and 4
- ensure that all pupils, particularly those in Years 3 and 5, make accelerated progress in mathematics and reading.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Teaching in all classes was observed jointly with the

headteacher. I looked at pupils' work in lessons and spoke to members of staff. Documents related to the monitoring of teaching, and pupils' progress data were reviewed. I also considered policies and procedures relating to the management of pupils' behaviour in the school.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, four members of the governing body have resigned and there are some vacancies for parent governors. Plans are progressing for the school to become an all-through primary school in September 2014.

Main findings

Teaching is improving although it is not yet securely good. The headteacher is acting more decisively when tackling weaker teaching and fewer excuses are being made for poor performance or slower progress for particular groups of pupils. Expectations of teachers and pupils have been raised and the school has clearer direction. The headteacher spends more time observing teaching, including unannounced visits to lessons and focused learning walks through the school. She acknowledges that in the past her judgements of teaching were over-generous, so she has now ensured that her judgements about the quality of teaching are accurate and validated by the local authority. Observations of teaching during the monitoring inspection confirmed that there is strong teaching in Years 5 and 6 and some improved practice in other year groups.

Senior leaders continue to have dedicated time to carry out their key responsibilities. Their confidence has grown and they work strongly as a team, taking more initiative and leading their areas with conviction. Senior leaders provide coaching and advice where teaching is less than good, or when teachers ask for support and guidance. For example, senior leaders could point to specific examples where action had been taken to challenge weaker teaching in mathematics following the analysis of pupils' progress.

Governors have a better understanding of pupil progress data as a result of effective training. They have a more realistic view of the performance of the school and are better informed about how to hold school leaders to account for improvements. However, there are not enough opportunities for school leaders and the headteacher to discuss their work professionally and reflect on their impact as leaders. Senior leaders are not sufficiently involved in formal monitoring and lesson observations. There are still times when the headteacher loses sight of the key priorities for improvement and becomes preoccupied with less urgent concerns.

Pupils' rates of progress are showing signs of improvement, although achievement is not yet good in Years 3 and 5. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium are making progress in line with, and sometimes exceeding, their peers. The school has made sure that teaching

assistants are deployed well to support pupils within lessons and in extra sessions. However, more needs to be done to accelerate the progress of pupils with English as an additional language. This group of pupils is increasing in size in the school but there is not enough support in place to ensure their rapid acquisition of English.

There is now a more systematic method for recording and analysing pupils' progress on a six weekly cycle. School leaders are consequently able to give a better account of the performance of different groups and identify where pupils need to catch up. For those pupils who are now making better progress, senior leaders have ensured that expectations are raised and more challenging targets have been set.

Following the last monitoring inspection, school leaders' sharp focus on improving writing skills, including spelling and punctuation, has led to more rapid progress although more needs to be done to improve reading. School leaders have introduced an improved marking policy and most teachers are implementing it. More teachers are marking pupils' work helpfully and providing pupils with opportunities to respond to their guidance. Pupils are clearly taking more pride in the presentation of their work. However, many pupils still do not form their letters correctly and handwriting is not sufficiently neat or cursive, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

The school rightly prides itself on pupils' positive behaviour and disruptions to learning are rare. During the monitoring inspection, pupils responded well in lessons and worked purposefully. However, when teaching is less than good, or when the teacher does not insist on high levels of concentration, a few pupils sometimes become inattentive.

Her Majesty's Inspector will visit the school again in the summer term 2014 to offer further support and challenge.

External support

The school continues to be a high priority for local authority support. The school improvement advisor works closely with the headteacher and supplies straight-talking advice and reminders of the key areas for improvement. The subject advisor for mathematics has also provided useful support and guidance. School leaders would benefit from more opportunities to observe examples of senior leadership teams working together effectively in good and outstanding schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector