

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 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

27 February 2014

Mrs Helen Wallace
Headteacher
Thameside Primary School
Harley Road
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 8DB

Dear Mrs Wallace

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thameside Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, a representative of the local authority and an external adviser to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated a range of documentation including the school action plan and information relating to the monitoring of teaching. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to all classes where I spoke to pupils about their work and looked at their books. I also met with a small group of pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Context

Since the last inspection a new teacher has joined the school to teach an additional Year 5 class.

Main findings

You have made significant changes to the teaching of mathematics across the school. There is greater consistency in how mathematics is being taught across the school and assessment information shows that pupils are making improved progress. The way in which lessons are now structured means that the work pupils complete is closely matched to their needs and abilities. There is an increased focus on using a problem solving approach to teaching mathematics. You have provided a range of useful training for teachers and teaching assistants so that they are developing the necessary skills to support this change of approach. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the challenge given to them in mathematics lessons.

You have provided effective training for staff and made improvements to the range of activities available to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means that there are more interesting and varied learning experiences for children and consequently their use of language has improved; they are able to communicate more confidently and competently about their learning both in speaking and writing.

You have reviewed your marking policy and established clear expectations for the feedback pupils receive. Pupils' books show that they are frequently given specific guidance on their next steps for learning. Consequently, pupils are able to explain how they need to improve their work. Opportunities for pupils to respond to this feedback are less frequent and there is still inconsistency about how this is done.

You are using a range of information including lesson observations, work in pupils' books and assessment information to form an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. Lesson observation documents show that teachers are given detailed feedback which enables them to improve their practice. As a result, teachers are given clear targets for improvement. You are providing useful, individual support to improve weaker teaching. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving.

The governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school. To further strengthen their role, there are now specific members of the governing body linked to key areas of the school's development plan. This is enabling governors to focus explicitly on key priorities and to develop an in-depth understanding of different areas of the school's work.

External support

The local authority has provided valuable training for teachers to develop Year 6 revision classes and as a result teachers' skills have strengthened in this area. The authority has also provided effective training for teaching assistants in Key Stage 1 so that phonics (the sounds letters and words make) is taught in a consistent way. In Key Stage 2, the authority has supported changes in the way reading is taught and as a result pupils' levels of understanding and comprehension are improving.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

Her Majesty's Inspector