

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

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Mrs D Hockey
Headteacher
Hadlow Primary School
Hadlow
Tonbridge
Kent
TN11 0EH

Dear Mrs Hockey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hadlow Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 March 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 and your staff 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 December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and school development plans are not sharp enough. The school should take immediate action to:

- rewrite the development plan, ensuring that short-term and long-term targets are challenging but achievable
- strengthen the impact of the checks made on the quality of teaching.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. We discussed the action taken since the last inspection. The school's development plan was evaluated. I also looked at the school's records of monitoring activities such as

lesson observations, information about pupils' progress and documents used to record pupil progress review meetings.

Main findings

The governors and whole staff team were disappointed by the outcome of the inspection and some members of staff still find it hard to accept the judgements. You have put the disappointment behind you and are determined to improve the school as quickly as possible. There is a commendable sense of urgency in your response, but the development plan you have drawn up for this term is over ambitious and has short-term targets that are not attainable. Some planned actions, such as the introduction of a system of 'peer coaching' between teacher colleagues are inappropriate at this stage. The rating system used to review the plan lacks clarity, so it is difficult for the governing body to judge whether actions have been completed or whether the school is on track to meet the very challenging targets that have been set.

Several new initiatives have been introduced successfully since the section 5 inspection. There is a new policy for marking and feedback and teachers have raised their expectations of how pupils should present their work. However, some of the important areas inspectors identified as requiring improvement have not yet been tackled in a systematic way. For example, targets for improvement in the quality of teaching will not be met this term. Although senior leaders visit classrooms regularly, checks on the quality of teaching are not rigorous enough. Senior leaders know a lot about each teacher's strengths and areas for development, but they do not use this information effectively to plan tailored programmes of support for teachers.

The governing body is not in a good position to hold school leaders to account because it has accepted the unrealistic targets in the school's development plan too readily. Reports to the governing body on the progress of initiatives are not sharp enough and give a confusing picture of the school's progress.

HMI will return to the school in the summer term to review progress and will provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

School staff value the support of colleagues in the local school network. This provides opportunities to share good practice and discuss issues that are of mutual interest.

The local authority adviser who is supporting the school provides high quality guidance and challenge to school leaders. She has correctly assessed that the school needs to build the capacity of school leaders and has brokered more formal

leadership support from a Headteacher in a local school. This work is at an early stage so it is not possible to assess its impact.

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

Yours sincerely

Melanie Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector