

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

2 May 2014

Mr Kevin Davies
Headteacher
Knaphill School
High Street
Woking
GU21 2QH

Dear Mr Davies

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Knaphill School

Following my visit to your school on 1 May 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 January 2014. 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:

- develop leadership skills at all levels
- ensure that assessments of pupils' starting points are accurate and used to match teaching closely to their needs and to form a baseline for suitably ambitious targets.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and your senior leadership team, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I toured the school with a group of pupils and visited some classes at work with you. I evaluated the school development plan and looked at other key documents and some samples of pupils' work.

Context

One year group leader has left to take up a deputy headteacher post since the inspection. You have very recently appointed a replacement who will join the staff in September. Three governors, including the Chair, have resigned as they feel work commitments mean they cannot give the time needed to the school.

Main findings

While there obviously remains some disappointment and disagreement with the inspection outcomes, you and other leaders, including governors, recognise the need to draw a line under that. You know that the focus has to be on ensuring the quality of education provided is good. The school development plan has been revised to take account of each point for improvement identified during the inspection. As a result there is an appropriate focus on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The plan would however benefit from more detail, or explicit links to subject plans, as to the actions needed and when they will take place. It needs to be clear what the milestones will be to check progress along the way. We also discussed how it would be helpful to be more explicit in the plan about the proportion of pupils you expect to make better than expected progress.

You have made a positive start on taking action. For example, the marking policy has been reviewed and you have undertaken a review to check that it is being consistently implemented. It is early days but there is evidence of teachers being clearer with pupils what they have done well and how they can improve their work. I suggested it would be helpful to be more explicit how and when pupils will be expected to respond to this guidance. Expectations of behaviour have been reinforced with pupils and training for staff is due to take place later this month. You and other leaders are investigating systems for recording and analysing incidents of inappropriate behaviour. You realise any such system needs to be fit for purpose. To that end, I recommended Ofsted's report *'No place for bullying'*.

Year group leaders have rightly refocused their work to support teachers to challenge more-able pupils, particularly in Year 3. It is important you ensure that information about pupils' starting points is accurate and sufficiently detailed to set work at the right level from the start of Year 3. The local authority has agreed to support the school to do this over the course of this term and into the autumn. A recent local authority review of the quality of teaching was used to gauge year group leaders' skills in driving improvement. The support these leaders provide for teachers, both in their year groups and across the school in their subjects, has a positive impact on teaching. They are less good at supporting and challenging individual teachers to improve. You are rightly looking at opportunities to develop their skills in this area.

The recommended review of governance has taken place although the findings were not available at this inspection. There are signs that governors, even though they are relatively inexperienced, have a better understanding of what needs to be done. They have already done much to support the improvement of communications with parents. Governors know they now need to turn their attention to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The Learning and Welfare Committee has a clear brief for this. They recognise they need further training to help them do this effectively and welcome, subject to the findings of the review, the support of an advanced skills governor to ensure they do a good job.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority had already identified the school for a high level support well in advance of the inspection. In addition to providing a range of support over the last 18 months it has held half-termly review meetings to check on progress. Since the inspection its support has focused appropriately on the teaching of reading and writing and the review of governance. Officers conducted a joint review of teaching with senior leaders towards the end of last term. While it is pleasing that they noted an improvement in the quality of teaching I discussed with the local authority and you the importance of taking account the progress pupils make over time as well as what is seen in individual lessons. The local authority has also brokered support from a local leader in education which you plan to use to help you review leadership roles and responsibilities. You have also asked for support to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are making as much progress as they can.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Storey
Her Majesty's Inspector