

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

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Miss Tracey Moyes
Headteacher
Fox Hill Primary School
Pondmoor Road
Bracknell
RG12 7JZ

Dear Miss Moyes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Fox Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 February 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:

- secure the leadership capacity needed for September, including linking with a good or better school to provide support for the new headteacher and other leaders
- ensure the external reviews of governance and pupil premium funding take place as a matter of priority and recommendations are followed up swiftly to strengthen governors' role in driving improvement.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and your senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We walked around school together to see classes at work. I evaluated the school development plan and looked at other key documents.

Context

You informed governors in January of your decision to leave at the end of the school year. The deputy headteacher will be leaving at the same time as she has been promoted. The Nursery teacher left the school at February half term.

Main findings

The school development plan is appropriately focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, and strengthening leadership and management. It takes account of all the points for improvement identified during the inspection and sets out clearly what actions will be taken. A separate planner maps what will happen each week. This helps you and your senior leaders manage what has to be done and informs staff what will be happening when and, importantly, what should improve as a result. Targets and milestones in the plan are based on clear expectations of the progress pupils should make and the levels they should reach by the end of each term. Since the inspection you have started to track and set targets for the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress. Linked to this, you are aiming for more pupils to reach the higher levels. These targets need quantifying so that it is clear what the school is aiming for, rather than simply being ambitious for the proportion to increase. I suggested you need to make sure that the plan always separates who is responsible for leading improvement activities and who will keep a check on implementation to avoid slippage.

Since the inspection, you and your senior leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. This has included staff meetings and training which you have followed up by monitoring. You have a clear and honest view of where teaching is strong and where it still needs to improve based on observations of lessons, looking at teachers' planning and work in pupils' books. We discussed the need to complete the picture by taking account of the progress pupils make over time. Walking around school I saw signs that more appropriate levels of challenge are having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. There is more consistency between provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. Marking and feedback to pupils, and their presentation of work in their books, are improving but are still inconsistent across the school.

The senior leadership team has been strengthened in the last term with the addition of the maths leader. The leadership capacity for September, however, is unknown at this point. A new headteacher has been appointed, but interviews for a new deputy headteacher are yet to happen and other roles are still to be confirmed. It is crucial that a strong leadership team is in place for the start of next term to ensure the school can sustain and build on improvements to date.

Governors' time has been taken up with the process of appointing the new headteacher. The external reviews of governance and the use of pupil premium

funding have not yet taken place. This means that governors have not considered how they can be more effective at driving improvement and holding senior leaders to account. They are not rigorously checking how well additional funding is being used to improve standards and opportunities for pupils. Subject to the findings of the reviews, which need to happen as a matter of priority, it is likely that an additional experienced governor will be needed to provide support.

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

Prior to the inspection, the local authority was aware of staffing issues at the school but had not identified it as needing additional support. Since the inspection, however, it has increased the level of support from the school improvement partner, who can request additional support from consultants as appropriate. She will meet with you and the new headteacher later this term to ensure action plans stay on track with the change in leadership and that appropriate support is in place from the start. The school improvement partner is confident, but will check, that the new headteacher will get the headteacher of a good or outstanding school as a mentor. She will also check what additional support might be provided if you do not manage to appoint a new deputy headteacher for September.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Storey
Her Majesty's Inspector