

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
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com



3 June 2014

Mrs Caroline Polley
The Headteacher
Covingham Park Primary School
The Harriers
Swindon
SN3 5BD

Dear Mrs Polley

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Covingham Park Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Tuesday 3 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about pupils' learning behaviour and attitudes in lessons.

Evidence

The inspector gathered a range of evidence including: observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in class; observations of pupils' behaviour around the school; scrutiny of documentary evidence; and discussions with pupils, parents, senior leaders and staff.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time behaviour and safety are good.

Context

Covingham Park Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in care) is well below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.

The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.

The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. A very small number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Year 6. Privately-run before-and after-school clubs and an independent pre-school operate on the school site and share some of the school's facilities. As they are managed independently, they were not a part of this inspection.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Since the last full Ofsted inspection in October 2013, the headteacher and senior leaders have continued with their purposeful actions to raise teachers' expectations and improve pupils' attitudes to learning. All those who met with the inspector agreed that, as a result, pupils' behaviour in lessons has improved and is now good.

A concerted training programme has been successful in improving teachers' ability to plan for pupils' different learning needs and abilities. Interesting tasks are stimulating their enthusiasm for learning and improving their engagement in lessons. New approaches to mathematical teaching are enabling pupils to discuss and explore their ideas at length. Focused group or paired work are fostering positive relationships within lessons and allowing for more in-depth and detailed learning discussions to occur. The new approach to project-based homework, a change from a worksheet-dominated system, has grasped pupils' interest. It is producing some high quality enquiry based work that complements the topics being taught in school. Pupils said they are enjoying the new theme days, such as the art day which provides time to study different artists and learn new techniques. Visitors, such as the road safety team, supplement the taught subjects well and provide a useful opportunity to learn about aspects of safety relating to life out of school. Pupils recognise and appreciate these changes, acknowledging that more interesting lessons are improving their behaviour and attitudes to learning, leading to a 'happy and harmonious school'.

The beginning and end of the school day are managed well. Lessons begin on time because duty staff, including the headteacher, are available and strategically placed to encourage pupils to attend classes promptly. A calm start to the school day ensues. This orderly atmosphere permeates through the school as pupils move between lessons or out to break and lunch times. Leaders ensure a measured, controlled and sensible approach is taken by all pupils as they move through cloakrooms and along corridors. Outside, playtime activities are well organised and structured. A helpful rota system operates for older pupils to vary the different opportunities available such as football, basketball or the trim trail. A plentiful supply of picnic tables allows those pupils who prefer a quieter playtime a place to go.

Pupils welcome the numerous opportunities to take on positions of responsibility such as 'play agents', and act maturely when undertaking such roles.

School leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Detailed behaviour records are kept of any serious incidents so that emerging patterns can be quickly identified. Senior leaders check that the policy for managing behaviour is working as expected. There is scope for the senior managers to improve the way in which they use this information more efficiently. The nurture group is helping pupils with the most complex behaviour needs to manage their emotions successfully, and is preparing them well for their learning in lessons. Better quality and earlier identification of these pupils' learning needs has resulted in no pupils being excluded from school this year. Pupils' attendance is above the national average and improving further because pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils feel very safe in school and are unanimously confident in their view that the school will deal with any incidents that may arise. Routine learning in personal, social and health education lessons, as well as assembly experiences, develops pupils' good understanding of the effect of bullying behaviour. Pupils know that bullying can take many forms, including verbal bullying and the use of new technologies. They also hold a very good grasp of the schools' procedures for rewards and sanctions. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are very appreciative of the opportunity in assemblies to have their work celebrated and personal achievements being mentioned in school newsletters. Most importantly, the new house point system, to earn 15 minutes of extra play each week, is having a positive, motivating effect on all pupils. The additional focus on learning in lessons is making teachers and pupils take responsibility for their work and actions.

While nearly all pupils follow the school's uniform policy, a very small group choose not to. This results in a few isolated cases of pupils wearing nail-varnish, fashion boots instead of school shoes, or hoop earrings.

Priorities for further improvement

- Refine the school improvement plan by clarifying the criteria to judge how improvements to pupils' behaviour will be evaluated and by whom.
- Work with parents to ensure all pupils adhere to the school's uniform policy.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Swindon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector