

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

7 July 2014

Ms S Green
Headteacher
Wrotham Road Primary School
Wrotham Road
Gravesend
DA11 0QF

Dear Ms Green

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wrotham Road Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 7 July 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 April 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:

- sharpen the action plan so that all actions have clear persons responsible, impact measures and timescales
- ensure once staffing is finalised that all leaders have a clear role in making sure all pupils learn as well as they can
- conduct the review of pupil premium spending asked for by the section 5 inspection so as to sharpen governors' challenge to school leaders over how it is used.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your deputy and middle leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We went on a tour of the school visiting every class. I evaluated a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, information relating to the monitoring of teaching, information about the progress pupils are making and records of governors' meetings. I looked at a selection of pupils' books.

Main findings

Your action plan is focused on the areas for development identified in the previous inspection. The actions it contains are the right ones to bring about change in the areas required but it is not always clear enough who is responsible for each action, how the impact will be checked or the timescale involved.

More regular monitoring of lessons by you and other senior leaders is beginning to improve the quality of teaching. It is good to see that marking has been a focus for staff training. Books are marked more regularly and teachers' comments are more relevant to what pupils are being expected to learn. As a result, pupils are responding increasingly well to marking, editing their work and practising spellings for example.

Staff have higher expectations for pupils, which is contributing to the raising of standards. There is generally an improving picture of progress in Years 1 to 3, where it has been weakest, with pupils more ready to learn. However, rates of progress remain too inconsistent overall for pupils to make up for past underachievement. In almost all classes pupils have made more rapid progress in writing than in reading.

I am pleased to see that you and other senior leaders are making increasingly good use of information about pupils' progress to plan extra support where pupils are in danger of falling behind. Support for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding continues to improve, so their progress is accelerating. However, the school does need to review its spending to ensure the money is going on the most effective strategies. You have taken further good steps to support families, for example where there are concerns over attendance. This encourages pupils to get to school and enriches their experience, such as through sports activities, aimed at making them feel more positive about themselves and their ability to learn.

Both you and deputy headteacher are relatively new in post and are working hard to make the most of your complementary skills. It is unfortunate that the full staff team for September is still uncertain. Once staffing is finalised, roles and responsibilities for leadership at all levels need to be clearly linked to the raising of pupil attainment.

Governors are very supportive of the school and benefit from a strong chairperson. They visit the school regularly and can talk in general terms about the actions being taken by the school leaders. The governors are auditing their skills but need to commission the review of the spending of the pupil premium grant required by the section 5 inspection so as to see how the school can strengthen its work further.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. A second visit in the spring term will focus on the impact of the leadership team in raising attainment.

External support

The local authority has identified the school as needing support and is providing effective input to develop teaching and learning and strengthen leadership skills. It is important that this support continues to be made available along with the links to other good and outstanding schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson
Seconded Inspector