

Tribal
Kings Orchard
One Queen Street
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5359
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

15 September 2014

Brian McCaldin
Headteacher
Luxulyan School
Luxulyan
Bodmin
PL30 5EE

Dear Mr McCaldin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Luxulyan School

Following my visit to your school on 15 September 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 March 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:

- strengthen the school development plan by inserting clear pupil progress targets with termly attainment milestones. The plan should also: establish a clear timeline of steps to becoming a good school, articulate the urgency and expectations precisely to staff and, allow careful monitoring by the governing body.
- ensure senior leaders and governors attend an Ofsted seminar 'Getting to Good'
- members of the governing body should pursue links with an outstanding governing body or National Lead Governor to observe and learn from their work so that governance at Luxulyan can improve rapidly.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority to assess the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement and school self-evaluation documents reviewed.

Context

There have been two changes to the teaching staff since the time of the last inspection.

Main findings

The initial disappointment with the outcome of the recent inspection has largely been overcome and is now accepted by staff and governors. Leaders and managers have a clearer picture of what the school needs to do to improve and there is a renewed sense of rigour to develop the quality of education provided. The school is aware there is no room for complacency and have a limited time span to act. The positive start being made will need to be maintained with methodical precision as the distance to travel to becoming good is considerable.

Middle leaders are playing a greater role in the drive for improvement. This, in turn, is releasing the headteacher to play a more strategic role in leading the school. Senior leaders have strengthened their monitoring of teachers' performance. More frequent pupil progress meetings are enabling earlier identification of those pupils at risk of falling behind. Staff are being held to account more rigorously for the performance of pupils in their class.

The new approach to the teaching of phonics for younger pupils is proving successful. Careful checking during whole class teaching sessions is allowing teachers to target questions to individual pupils more carefully. Better use of multi-sensory resources is allowing pupils apply their learning more regularly. The revision of the mathematics curriculum has rightly focussed on conceptual development and pupils' problem solving skills. A new approach to lessons is enabling teachers to react more precisely to pupils' individual learning needs.

The introduction of new transition arrangements for pupils moving through the school has helped speed up pupils' achievement following the summer break. 'Bridging tasks' focussing on mathematics during the summer holidays, has ensured teachers' better knowledge and understanding of pupils' prior learning when the Autumn term started. This has resulted in better progress being made so far this term than has previously been seen.

The school development plan identifies actions to improve teaching and learning. Precise details of how this translates into improvements in pupil outcomes over time and, how specific actions will be evaluated, are less strong. The headteacher intends to revise the plan with governors and the school improvement partner.

The governing body have been pro-active in conducting an external review in order to contribute more strongly to the leadership of the school. Helpful reports from the headteacher are enabling some, although not all governors to get behind the pupil progress headlines and ask more challenging questions. The chair of the governing body recognises some additional training would benefit the school in this area. An increasing number of visits to gather first hand evidence of the school's work, linked to the school development plan would also strengthen this strategic aspect of governance.

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 school has received some support from the local authority prior to the section 5 inspection. Involvement in the school has now increased. Advisers and consultants are now offering well-targeted support and challenge for the school's leaders. The headteacher has received helpful advice on revising the school improvement plan, in light of the inspection findings. Support for the governing body to review their performance has been well received. This has been followed up by additional support brokered from a National Lead Governor. On-going guidance to refine the school's development plan, improve subject leader's lesson observation skills and train governors to develop their strategic role is already planned.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector