

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

30 September 2014

Mr N Stevens
Headteacher
Wessex Primary School
Saint Adrian's Close
Cox Green
Maidenhead
SL6 3AT

Dear Mr Stevens

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wessex Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 30 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 June 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:

- ensure the school improvement plan reflects the work being done in tackling the areas for improvement, and identifies clear milestones by which governors can check that your actions are helping the school to improve
- enable governors to ask more challenging questions when seeking to hold you to account
- improve the accuracy of the assessments of teachers' effectiveness.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, governors, middle leaders and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We visited classes with the deputy headteacher and we looked at work in pupils' books. I evaluated the school improvement plan and reviewed a range of relevant documentation.

Context

Since the last inspection the inclusion co-ordinator, who carried out the role part-time, has retired and you have appointed a new full-time co-ordinator to replace her.

Main findings

You have focused sharply on addressing the areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection, demonstrating determination to improve the school quickly. However, the school improvement plan does not reflect the actions you are taking or show how you will know if you have been successful. The plan needs to be amended so that it is clear what actions are planned to improve the school. It should also include termly milestones so governors can check that what you are doing is helping pupils to learn more.

The staff and pupils demonstrate a positive, 'can-do' attitude, which reflects the qualities you promote in your assemblies and personal, social and health education, such as being resilient and successful. The respect between staff and pupils was noticeable and, as we walked around the school, it was impressive that you knew each child's name, personal circumstance and attainment.

Governors have sensibly chosen to undergo an external review of governance so that they can carry out their role more effectively. They now recognise that they need to hold you to account by asking more challenging questions. However, you need to provide clearer and more detailed information about the school in order for governors to question you effectively.

Middle leaders are checking teaching more regularly and have an accurate view of what teachers' need to do to improve. The English and mathematics leaders are working effectively with individual teachers to share ways of improving pupils' learning. This work is being supported and extended well by the local authority advisor. The phonics (the link between letters and sounds) leader has improved the teaching and learning of phonics through sharing best practice and involving parents. This has enabled significantly more pupils to reach the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check this year than last.

Your actions to improve the attainment and progress of pupils who are eligible for additional pupil premium funding (government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority, or from service families) are helping them to do better. A good example of this is the 'summer school' you organised to provide additional support for them during the holidays. At the end of last term, in Years 3 and 6, these pupils had learned at a faster rate than their peers. You recognise that this needs to be the same for all year groups. The pupil premium information on the website now meets the statutory requirements and explains how you intend the funding to be used in the coming academic year.

The end of year assessment results are more positive than the previous year for Key Stage 1 writing, with more pupils achieving above the expected level. In reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, more pupils achieved at the expected level. The results are inconsistent across subjects and for different groups, but overall the trend is improving.

The inclusion co-ordinator is rightly reviewing the effectiveness of the support provided for disabled pupils and those with educational needs. Her plans to develop the skills of the teaching assistants are sensible and have the potential to enable the pupils to make more progress. Her regular checks of the support provided and progress made will be essential.

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 support provided by the local authority is helping middle leaders and governors to be more effective. I am pleased that you have planned to carry out checks on teaching and learning with the local authority's school improvement partner, so as to sharpen your judgements on the quality of teaching. It would also be beneficial for her to meet with you and the Chair of the Governor Body to agree the best way for you to keep the governing body informed and for them to hold you to account.

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

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams
Seconded Inspector