

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5323  
**Direct email:** [suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com](mailto:suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com)



30 January 2015

Mrs Donna Harper  
Headteacher  
Alumwell Infant School  
Primley Avenue  
Walsall  
West Midlands  
WS2 9UP

Dear Mrs Harper

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Alumwell Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 January 2015 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 October 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:

- improve teachers' knowledge of assessment so that they can monitor the progress of their pupils more accurately and robustly during lessons and over time
- make sure that the school improvement plan defines who is monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's actions on pupils' learning and incorporate more timely and objective assessments of progress towards pupil performance targets
- build on the good links established with the partner headteacher by providing more opportunities for teachers and leaders to see and share good practice

- make sure that the governing body steps up its monitoring activities alongside school leaders and gathers more first-hand evidence, such as pupil performance data, to hold the staff to account for the school's actions to raise standards and improve teaching in all classes.

## **Evidence**

In addition to visiting classes and meeting with you and the deputy headteacher, meetings were held to discuss the actions taken since the school's inspection in October 2014. These included meetings with three representatives of the governing body, including the Chair, and telephone conferences with the local authority's school improvement adviser, an independent external adviser commissioned by the school and a local headteacher of a good school who is working in partnership with leaders and staff. I evaluated the school's improvement plan and during discussions with you, the deputy headteacher and three governors, looked at pupil performance data and some monitoring reports about the quality of teaching.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection one teacher has returned from family leave and is working part-time and the school has appointed another full-time teacher who started in January.

## **Main findings**

From leaders' records of the monitoring of lessons, pupils' work and assessment information a significant amount of teaching is of good or better quality. The Early Years Foundation Stage has maintained the good practice evident at the time of the October 2014 inspection. Leaders rightly judge that some teaching still requires improvement and there is a good range of monitoring and support in place to improve teaching in these classes. Nonetheless leaders and teachers are not yet focusing enough on how well pupils achieve in lessons to gauge whether all pupils are on course to reach short and long term attainment targets. Leaders monitor lessons and pupils' work but monitoring reports do not always refer to how well pupils are learning or to the use made by teachers of assessment information about pupils' learning and progress. The school's improvement plan shows that leaders have set out the right priorities for sustained improvement. However, the improvement plan does not always set out measures of success that focus on pupils' learning targets. This makes it difficult for leaders to gauge how well teaching is improving if the measures being used are not specifically matched to pupil achievement.

Senior leaders, governors and staff with management responsibilities undertake regular monitoring and this is well organised and systematic. However, the improvement plan does not define who is monitoring and who is evaluating the

impact of actions taken to improve teaching. This is necessary to provide objective and accurate evaluations of improvement. A review of governance has been undertaken and governors are responding well to recommendations about improving their knowledge of pupil performance data. Governors still need to gather more first-hand evidence of the impact of actions being taken to improve pupil achievement in all classes.

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 local authority is supporting and monitoring the school although this has, until now, been light touch support. The school has also been proactive in securing the support of an independent consultant who advises staff on the use of pupil performance and achievement data. In addition, leaders and governors have established a fruitful partnership with a local headteacher of a good school who is providing opportunities for teachers and leaders to see and share good practice in her school.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**