

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 5359  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

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Mr Roger Mitchell  
Headteacher  
Ripple Primary School  
Suffolk Road  
Barking  
Essex  
IG11 7QS

Dear Mr Mitchell

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ripple Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 12 February 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 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 pupils make the same rapid progress in reading that is evident in writing and mathematics
- check that the focus on pupils' writing does not restrict pupils' learning of other subjects.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, pupils from Key Stage 2, two representatives from the governing body including the

Chair of Governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection.

I examined school improvement documents, records of the monitoring of teaching, safeguarding records and governing body minutes. I looked at pupils' current achievement data as well as published information. You accompanied me during visits to classes on both school sites, where we observed teaching from Nursery through to Year 6 and looked at pupils' work.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in January 2014, 19 new teachers have been appointed to the school. Four phase leaders are no longer class based, enabling them to monitor and improve teaching and learning throughout the school. The school continues to grow towards a full five forms of entry.

## **Main findings**

You have put in place a comprehensive improvement plan which sets out clear actions to address the areas for improvement from the last section 5 inspection. This has been updated following a rigorous evaluation of the original plan in July 2014. You are well supported by senior and middle leaders, who monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly and review the plan fortnightly. From this information, targets for further improvement are set and shared with all staff to ensure actions are on track to secure rapid improvement. Alongside this, senior and middle leaders are providing personalised support to teachers to enable them to refine their practice. This has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Teachers' expectations of pupils have increased. Feedback provides clearer, more challenging targets. Pupils are responding to these and making significant improvements to their work. This is particularly strong in writing, where pupils have frequent opportunities to write at length. Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to analyse pupils' individual performance. In most classes, good progress is being made in writing and mathematics. Although pupils' progress in reading is less rapid, leaders have put in place strategies which are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. For example, senior leaders are supporting Year 6 pupils with reading.

Children make a good start in Nursery and Reception. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is now not only accurate but of an extremely high quality. This is enabling children to make exceptional progress in reading and writing and attain in line with their peers nationally.

Leaders have used the implementation of the new national curriculum as an opportunity to set more ambitious targets for each year group. This has been supported by good opportunities for professional development, enabling teachers to sharpen their assessment skills and develop effective strategies to cater for pupils with different abilities, including the more able. Leaders have also created opportunities for writing in all subjects. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in writing. However, leaders need to ensure that this focus on writing does not restrict pupils' learning in other subjects.

Governors are focused on ensuring that actions from the improvement plan are carried out quickly and successfully. They have benefited from recent training and have quickly developed their knowledge and skills in relation to measuring the school's performance. On their regular visits to the school they scrutinise performance data, look in pupils' books and talk to pupils informally. They meet with senior leaders fortnightly and ask challenging questions which effectively hold leaders to account.

### **External support**

The school has benefited this academic year from a new link advisor from the local authority. Leaders value her regular visits which have a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and further developing the skills of middle leaders. The link advisor also attends fortnightly monitoring board meetings to ensure the school is effectively implementing its improvement plan. Support has been given to improve the teaching of pupils with English as an additional language and develop the skills of governors. An alliance of headteachers, each with a proven track record of school improvement, provides additional support to the school's leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Mel Rose

**Her Majesty's Inspector**