

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 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com



17 March 2015

Headteacher
The Alton School
Danebury Avenue
Roehampton
London
SW15 4PD

Dear Mrs Hudson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Alton School

Following my visit to your school on 17 March 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 November 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 governing body's evaluation of the actions in the plan in order to form well-evidenced judgments and to inform next actions.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the actions the school is taking. I visited classes in each year group and the specialist resource base. I looked at pupils' work in classrooms and in a separate sample work. As I toured the school with you, I talked with pupils about their learning and met a further group during the lunch break. The school action plans were evaluated and I considered a

number of other documents, including records of meetings and recent information on pupils' progress.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the Resource Base lead has taken up responsibility as the school's inclusion leader. The school's assessment lead has taken up responsibilities as the interim assistant headteacher. The governing body has taken steps to reconstitute and is to carry out a review of governance.

Main findings

You have been quick to begin the process of addressing the areas for further improvement identified in the inspection report. You have put a plan in place which clearly sets out your expectations and the actions required to bring about improvement. The plan provides clear targets for success. Leaders and teachers know exactly what is expected of them and the plan helps them keep a sharp focus on the most important priorities.

You have ensured that leaders at all levels are clear about their responsibilities. This is leading to the greater involvement of middle leaders in working directly with colleagues to improve practice. As a result, pupils' work shows that they are beginning to improve their learning. However, the better progress seen in some books is not consistently mirrored in all classes and across all subjects. A good start had been made but further improvement is needed.

The clear guidance you have given to improve writing is helping teachers plan with greater precision. Marking is now carried out more consistently and this is helping pupils to improve their work. Teachers are making a concerted effort to ensure that they set suitably challenging work, especially in English. It is beginning to improve the quality of writing in other subjects too, but this is too inconsistent as yet. The level of challenge needs further development.

Stronger and more frequent monitoring of both teaching and pupils' progress means that leaders are now better placed to organise training for teachers and 'catch up' sessions for pupils. Assessments are moderated regularly by the local authority and other external partners. This means that poor progress is being spotted earlier and steps put in place to deal with it. Reorganisation of the day means that class teachers now have some allocated time each week to work with specific pupils to help them catch up and accelerate their progress. Through regular review meetings, leaders are holding teachers firmly to account now for the progress pupils make.

Ofsted may carry out further visits, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority is providing good quality additional support since the previous inspection. This is helping the school to keep a keen eye on progress against the action plan through regular challenge and review meetings. The local authority has provided extra consultant support, not least in ensuring that assessments are accurate so leaders can plan next steps accurately. The school also receives help from Hillbrook Primary School and other local schools. This is helping the school develop teachers' skills and knowledge for example in improving the use of data about pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector