

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

7 May 2015

Mrs M Davis
The Executive Headteacher
Walmore Hill Primary School
Walmore Hill
Gloucester
GL2 8LA

Dear Mrs Davis

Special measures monitoring inspection of Walmore Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 May 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

Ken Buxton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching and speed up pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have sufficiently high expectations of the quality, presentation and quantity of pupils' work
 - teachers plan lessons that challenge pupils of all abilities, especially the most able
 - teachers regularly check on pupils' learning in lessons so that work can be adapted as required
 - individual pupils' targets are set that help pupils to move on to their next stage of learning with confidence.
- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - providing more challenging opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills
 - providing opportunities for pupils to use mathematical knowledge in other subjects
 - making sure that marking clearly identifies the strengths in pupils' work and provides clear guidance about how improvement can be made.
- Improve leadership and management so that:
 - all leaders effectively check the quality of teaching and set targets that are directly related to pupils' progress
 - leaders set precise targets with staff for improving their teaching skills and provide appropriate training to help them improve the quality of their teaching
 - systems to track pupils' progress are followed consistently by all staff in order to identify and act upon any underachievement
 - subject leaders are given the opportunity and training to monitor the quality of provision and pupils' learning in their subjects.
- Improve governors' skills and knowledge in analysing information on pupils' progress and how it compares with schools nationally, to enable them to challenge leaders more rigorously to improve the standards achieved by pupils.

External reviews of both governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 6 May 2015

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised relevant documents and met with the executive headteacher and other members of staff, pupils, two governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, a teacher has left and a supply teacher appointed for the summer term. The school's part-time teacher leaves at the end of the summer term, as do the executive headteacher and the seconded teacher. At present, the school has no headteacher or teaching staff appointed for September 2015.

The governing body has advertised and interviewed a candidate for the post of permanent headteacher, but the decision was made not to appoint. The governing body is planning to meet to review the school's leadership options. Governors are also working to appoint teachers to replace those leaving.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' achievement is improving as more pupils than last year are working at the expected levels. The school's focus on improvement has resulted in pupils making faster progress than previously. As a result, pupils' attainment is higher than in previous years. In turn, these higher outcomes are motivating most pupils to want to do well.

Teachers are monitoring pupils' progress more carefully than before and have a good knowledge of their attainment. Consequently, teachers are planning activities that build on pupils' prior work, which is helping to ensure that learning is secure.

Teachers are increasingly planning activities to match pupils' different ages and abilities. This ensures that pupils complete suitably challenging work. However, there are times when more able pupils are required to wait while teachers explain work to other pupils in the class. As a result, these pupils feel frustrated as they lose time to complete their work.

The quality of teaching

Although the quality of teaching has strengthened, not all pupils are working to fulfil their potential.

Teachers' expectations of pupils are not always explicit. As a consequence, the quality, presentation and quantity of pupils' work are variable. In turn, this leads to

pupils making careless mistakes, including simple spelling errors. There are also inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' handwriting. As a result, pupils are not being presented routinely with high quality writing examples that illustrate the quality of writing expected.

Teachers' marking is not of a high enough standard to help pupils adapt and improve their work. In some instances, teachers' written comments are not legible and, as a result, do not enable pupils to learn from the feedback. On many occasions, pupils mark each other's work, which provides opportunities to assess the quality of another pupil's work. In some cases this leads to pupils marking work incorrectly as they do not have the necessary reading skills.

Pupils are set individual targets for English and mathematics. There is little evidence to show that these targets are reviewed regularly or, indeed, are appropriate for pupils' abilities. In some cases targets focus on developing skills that are beyond the pupil's current ability and are, therefore, irrelevant to helping them progress.

Teaching assistants contribute well to lessons. They support individuals and groups of pupils, enabling them to complete the tasks set successfully. They also monitor pupils' progress and support the teacher well in the classroom.

The displays around the school are of a higher standard than those seen previously during the year. Pupils speak proudly of seeing their work displayed as good examples for others to emulate.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

School leaders have recently revised the school's behaviour policy and introduced a new reward system. Teachers and support staff are working together well to ensure greater consistency in managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils have a comprehensive understanding of the school's behaviour expectations. Consequently, there are few incidents of pupils' inappropriate behaviour. When they do occur, the issue is managed sensitively and fairly.

Pupils often behave well in class and are attentive and responsive during lessons. However, pupils comment that there are specific times during the week, such as during physical education lessons, when some pupils do misbehave. As a result, pupils say that they do not enjoy those lessons as they lose time and are delayed in engaging in the activity planned.

Pupils feel safe at school and are confident that there are no issues with bullying.

Current data show that the school's overall attendance level for the year to date is lower than the national average. Those pupils with low attendance often do well when attending school and make the progress expected. However, because they are not attending regularly, there are some significant gaps in their learning, which have a negative impact on their achievement.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The governing body's lack of success in securing the school's future leadership is having a negative impact on the school's improvement work. The governors are finding it difficult to attract suitable applicants for permanent posts at the school, partly because of concerns about the school's long-term viability.

Following the departure of the teacher with responsibility for leading English, the executive headteacher has taken on this role. As a result, she has increased her workload and spends additional time to support the school's improvement work.

The executive headteacher's reports are very clear about the challenges the school needs to overcome to secure its long-term future. However, the minutes of the most recent governing body meeting do not show that the governors discussed the key improvement priorities or held the school to account for its work.

The executive headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and uses the information to set staff appropriate improvement targets. However, as a result of constant staffing changes, the plans have to be rewritten so as to take account of new training needs.

The school's system to track pupils' progress is proving successful as teachers have a clear overview of each pupil's rate of progress.

The senior leader with responsibility for mathematics has a good knowledge of pupils' progress. He is supported well by the executive headteacher and has benefited from a personalised programme of support that is enhancing his leadership skills. The executive headteacher, in her role of literacy lead teacher, has begun assessing the priorities needed to improve pupils' literacy skills.

The special educational needs coordinator has reorganised the way groups of pupils with learning difficulties are supported. Assessments to monitor the impact of support programmes have been instigated to ensure that they are meeting pupils' needs.

The Chair of the Governing Body is providing strong leadership for the governing body as it works to overcome the challenges faced by the school. He is innovative in his thinking as he looks for options that the governing body can consider to strengthen the school's staffing position. In addition, he has overseen the governing body's development plan so that it reflects current priorities.

The school's weekly newsletter provides useful information and reminders about events taking place. In addition, the school's website provides further detail, but some of the information provided is not current. Furthermore, the website does not include all of the information required to comply with the government's regulations.

External support

The local authority is monitoring the school's improvement and providing support that is valued by the senior leaders. The authority's regular reports provide a clear overview of the school's progress and highlight the challenges that are yet to be overcome.

As the governing body has not appointed a substantive headteacher, the governors are keen to engage even more closely with the local authority and make decisions to secure the staffing needed for next term.