

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs D Oates
The Headteacher
Offenham C of E First School
Myatt Road
Offenham
Evesham
Worcestershire
WR11 8SD

Dear Mrs Oates

Ofsted Monitoring of Grade 3 Schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 May 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I appreciated using your office as a base in which to work and the discussions we held about what the school needs to do next in order to bring about more rapid improvement.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 14 March 2006, the school was asked to:

- ensure that the more capable pupils are consistently challenged by teaching and the curriculum to do as well as they should
- develop the guidance to pupils so that they understand clearly what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work
- ensure that there is rigorous evaluation of how well teaching and the curriculum support pupils' progress.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievements.

The preliminary results of the Key Stage 1 national tests for 2007 are very encouraging, with all pupils reaching the levels expected for their age and a significant proportion doing even better than this. In Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils make satisfactory or better progress in literacy and numeracy, and achievement in reading is particularly strong. Nevertheless, the pupils' achievement

in writing is not good enough, with a third of the pupils making unsatisfactory progress. In Year 5 the more able pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading and mathematics but make only satisfactory progress in writing. In Years 3 and 4 the more able pupils do very well in reading and mathematics but again make only satisfactory progress in writing. The more capable pupils are clearly being challenged well in reading and mathematics but much less so in writing.

Teachers' planning is satisfactory overall but planning in literacy, particularly in writing, does not take enough account of the pupils' different starting points and capabilities. Pupils receive satisfactory, and sometimes very good, guidance to help improve their work in reading and mathematics. The quality of teachers' marking of the pupils' written work is, however, far too variable. In Year 2 pupils are given a good level of guidance about how to improve their writing but this is not developed sufficiently in Key Stage 2. In Years 3, 4 and 5 too much of the pupils' writing is unmarked and unchecked by the teachers, and many basic errors are repeated. Many of the written comments do not say what the pupils have done well or what they need to do next to improve their work. This clearly contributes to the slower progress made in writing than in reading and mathematics.

A sound start has been made to improve the quality of monitoring and self-evaluation. You observe lessons and provide teachers with written and oral feedback about how to improve their work. The role of subject leaders is developing satisfactorily and support is provided to help teachers monitor provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility. A system to track the pupils' progress and their achievements has recently been introduced and this is beginning to be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the school's evaluation of how well teaching and the curriculum supports pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently rigorous or robust. The checks on lessons, teachers' planning and the pupils' books are too infrequent. The written feedback to teachers identifies key areas for improvement but does not prioritise them or indicate when lessons will be checked again to make sure that weaknesses have been eliminated. You recognise that monitoring and self-evaluation must be more effective to ensure that more pupils make good and exceptional progress, particularly in writing.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Watters
Her Majesty's Inspector