

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



30 March 2009

Mr Hickey  
The Headteacher  
Lawn Primary School  
High Street  
Northfleet  
Gravesend  
Kent  
DA11 9HB

Dear Mr Hickey

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 March 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also extend my thanks to the pupils who spoke to me, the chair of governors and the School Improvement Partner.

As a result of the inspection on 5 December 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise leaders' and teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve, in order to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress
- ensure assessment information is accurate and used effectively to plan activities that meet pupils' learning needs
- develop rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures that focus sharply on pupils' learning
- improve attendance.

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' achievement.

Since the previous inspection standards have improved significantly in Key Stage 2 and are no longer exceptionally low. In 2008, the standards pupils attained by the end of Year 6 were below average in English and average in mathematics and science. Due to a rigorous focus on improving pupils' reading skills, through for example one to one reading sessions and the emphasis on guided reading, standards in this area have improved significantly and are close to the national average. Senior leaders are now prioritising work with higher attaining pupils for whom standards remain low particularly in writing and mathematics. Lesson



observations and school data for the current Year 6 indicate that the rise in standards will be maintained.

Children join the school with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below those usually expected for their age and although standards have also improved in Key Stage 1, they remain well below average. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their language skills, however they do not always challenge pupils robustly and systematically to develop speaking and listening skills.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils will achieve have improved. Turnover of staff has stabilised and lessons reflect a calm, work focused atmosphere. Behaviour in lessons is good, although pupils report standards of behaviour outside of lessons occasionally fall. Teachers have raised their expectation of what pupils can achieve and planning for different groups in lessons means pupils are on task and engaged in activities. In some lessons increased challenge for higher attaining pupils is also provided. However, given the pupils' weak literacy skills when they join the school, not enough is done in lessons to ensure that their progress in improving these skills is accelerated. In subjects such as mathematics and science teachers are not fully utilising opportunities to develop enquiry and reasoning skills by ensuring they plan questions which challenge pupils to articulate how and why things happen.

Better assessment systems are now in place and staff are beginning to make effective use of these. There are good systems to monitor the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science. These are evaluated regularly and senior leaders have an accurate overview of how pupils progress. Teachers use 'focus sheets' to record when pupils have met key learning objectives for all subjects and this helpful information is used to judge the overall progress pupils make. However, this is not done systematically and information is not shared with pupils. As a result, they do not know how well they are doing or what their targets for improvement are. Additional adults sometimes provide very good support by teaching specific groups of pupils and this helps to accelerate the progress of these individuals. However, on other occasions the role of adults supporting pupils is not clearly defined and these adults are given too little guidance by the teachers.

Some pupils reported that they find teachers' comments in their books helpful and act on them. However, marking does not always provide pupils with enough guidance about how to improve their work. Where teachers do give helpful advice in their marking, it is not always clear that pupils are acting on it.

Senior leaders are well informed and knowledgeable. Although a clear plan for monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school's work is in place, actions are not fully adhered to. Subject leaders monitor their areas well through lesson observations, and through scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. However, an overview of the strengths and weaknesses in each subject across the school does not exist and as a result it does not inform improvement planning.



Governors have been proactive in identifying the training they need and are working with the local authority in developing a bespoke package. They are very well informed about issues such as attendance and behaviour and their role in challenging the school continues to develop.

Systems to improve attendance are robust. The school works effectively with external agencies, such as police community officers and school nurses, in attempting to improve attendance levels. Pupils understand the importance of attendance and the school's rewards and sanctions system. This has resulted in an increase in the number of pupils with a 100% attendance. However, overall attendance remains below average and progress in this area has been inadequate. This is because the school is experiencing difficulties in shifting attitudes of some parents and carers whose children are persistently absent. Evidence indicates that the school challenges this firmly but would welcome more support from the local authority.

The impact of the support from the local authority has been satisfactory. Teachers have benefited from training offered by it and this is helping senior leaders to target specific intervention such as for weak language and communication skills of pupils. Senior leaders have been challenged robustly through monthly meetings with the School Improvement Partner which has helped to ensure a strategic overview of actions is maintained.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Asyia Kazmi  
Her Majesty's Inspector

