

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



12 February 2009

Mr Phil McKinnie
The Headteacher
Baytree School
The Campus
Highlands Lane
Weston-super-Mare
North Somerset
BS24 7DX

Dear Mr McKinnie

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 January 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the governors, parents and pupils who took the time to come and talk to me.

As a result of the inspection on 28 and 29 January 2008, the school was asked to:

- extend and develop the curriculum to make the best use of teaching time
- improve assessment to enable teachers to set challenging targets
- improve the monitoring by the senior management team.

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

The pupils' severe or profound learning difficulties mean that standards at the school are exceptionally low when compared to the national average. Achievement is satisfactory overall, although it is stronger in English and mathematics where teachers make better use of assessment information in order to ensure that work is matched more precisely to pupils' different capabilities and needs.

The school's leaders have evaluated the curriculum and have accurately identified its shortcomings. Staff are systematically carrying out the necessary revisions and amendments to schemes of work in line with a rolling plan of action that will take some time to complete. Classroom staff are engaged in fruitful discussions on the best way to promote creativity and inclusion in lessons in order to make activities as accessible as possible to all pupils. The school has introduced a themed curriculum for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, which provides good opportunities for cross-curricular

work and is now underpinning learning. There is an extensive range of activities to enrich the curriculum, including increased residential opportunities and visits from theatre groups often in partnership with the neighbouring primary school. For pupils at Key Stage 4, the school has introduced a good range of accreditation that meets their needs well. The newly appointed senior manager for post-16 is steadily bringing about improvements. The students are now taught in a self-contained environment and enjoy an expanded curriculum, accredited through ASDAN, that suitably reflects their needs as young adults. The provision for work related learning is much improved through stronger relationships with Connexions, the local college and mainstream schools. There are opportunities for work experience and for education in mainstream schools and colleges, although the number of participating pupils is still relatively low.

The school has developed a new, comprehensive policy for assessment, recording and reporting which sets out clearly the new arrangements for individual education planning and target setting. Parents appreciate the more frequent meetings to review individual targets. Not all teachers set effective targets, but the headteacher is bringing about fast improvement through regular checks and written feedback. Pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in devising their own targets, where this is practicable and meaningful. The school has introduced an effective recording system that provides a good evidence base of pupils' key personal and academic outcomes. Teachers regularly meet with staff from a local special school to ensure the consistency of their judgements. The school now systematically collates pupil assessment information in order to identify quickly where there is underachievement. The system is still too new for the school to reach reliable conclusions on which to base its strategies for improvement.

The local authority has given the school good support by allocating a very experienced School Improvement Partner to assist the leadership team and governors. The headteacher has set a clear vision for rapid improvement to which the staff are committed. Many monitoring activities, such as the evaluation of lesson planning, are still undertaken only by the headteacher. Nevertheless, this monitoring is proving effective and the school has begun to distribute leadership more widely. The deputy headteacher shares in the monitoring of staff performance and other members of the senior management team have undertaken training in lesson observation, and will be involved in joint lesson observations in the near future. All members of the senior management team conduct performance management interviews.

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

Mick Megee
Additional Inspector

