

Tribal Education
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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

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Ms Frances Moule
Wynstream School
Burnthouse Lane
Exeter
Devon
EX2 6AY

Dear Ms Moule

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 June 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 14-15 May 2009, the school was asked to:

- improve pupils' achievements, particularly in reading in Years 1 and 2 and writing in Years 3 to 6
- raise expectations of what pupils might achieve and ensure consistent challenge in the tasks set during lessons
- give pupils more responsibility for organising and managing their learning to build their confidence and capacity to learn on their own.

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.

Under the leadership of a very effective and focused team, morale amongst the staff at the school has risen substantially since the last inspection. The whole staff is now involved in making decisions about the future developments and is provided with regular opportunities for planning and monitoring in teams, both within the school across a new partnership with the executive headteacher's own school. This is having a very positive impact on the professional development of both teachers and learning support assistants, who really appreciate the benefits of working together and sharing expertise and ideas. Now they are taking more responsibility for developments, teaching and support staff have a sense of moving forwards together and are beginning to see the impact of their hard work on pupils' achievements.

Standards at Key Stage 1 are satisfactory and pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, with good progress in reading in Year 1. In Year 2 pupils made better progress in writing than in reading over the earlier part of this year and they



were being assessed again at the time of my visit. At Key Stage 2 standards are still low but there has been exceptional improvement since the last inspection. In the tests in 2009 Year 6 pupils are expected to exceed the minimum targets expected, for the first time for several years. Good provision, both through class teaching and intervention for particular individuals and groups of children, has helped to tackle a legacy of underachievement in Years 5 and 6, and some pupils have made very rapid progress. Overall at Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory. There has been improvement in pupils' writing skills, but they have made even more progress in mathematics and reading, although there is still considerable variation between year groups. Writing remains the weakest area.

Pupils are now familiar with a useful vocabulary to talk about their learning, and they readily use this to explain what they are achieving in lessons. Robust and effective systems for rewards and behaviour management motivate pupils. They are really excited by the opportunities they are given, particularly the recently introduced 'Thinking and Learning Journeys' where they are involved in planning both how and what they will learn. This is a creative and innovative strategy to increase pupils' motivation and independent thinking skills. The process of deciding where to visit and what they want to find out, encourages pupils to make links across subjects and to look outwards into the community and local environment. The pupils' presentations of their work have brought many more parents into school to find out what their children have been doing.

As standards rise and the legacy of low achievement is removed, the school's priority is to raise the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms and ensure that the work given to pupils is closely matched to their needs. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and a range of interesting activities are provided for them, but work does not always challenge pupils of all abilities sufficiently. A focus on encouraging teachers to 'tell less and ask more' has improved the quality of questioning, which now encourages pupils to think more for themselves. Positive and detailed marking makes clear to pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. In Year 1 good use is made of this information to set personalised targets for pupils but this helpful practice is not yet spread consistently across the school. Teachers focus effectively in building pupils' speaking and listening skills in Key Stage 1, but this is not yet extended so well to secure pupils' self-confidence and presentational skills at Key Stage 2.

There are robust long term plans in place to ensure the successful transfer of responsibilities to a new leadership team in September 2010. The local authority has provided support in setting up the management partnership with Shaldon Primary School.

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
Her Majesty's Inspector

