

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland Square T 08456 40 40 40
Bristol enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
BS2 8RR www.ofsted.gov.uk

19 October 2009

Mrs A Brown
Headteacher
Honiton Primary School
Clapper Lane
Honiton
Devon
EX14 1QF

Dear Mrs Brown

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I visited your school on 9 October 2009, for the information which you provided and the considerable time that you and the deputy headteacher shared with me during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, governors and parents I spoke to, and also to the polite and helpful group of pupils from the school council who told me all about their school.

As a result of the inspection on 28 and 29 January 2009, the school was asked to:

- improve the rate of pupils' progress in writing and mathematics in all year groups by ensuring that the work set for pupils helps them to fill the gaps in their learning
- improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that work is more closely matched to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils
- provide an overarching strategy for evaluating the impact of action to improve teaching and use the information to plan for further school improvement.

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.

The stimulating learning environments evident in Nursery and Reception and Years 1 and 2 classes reflect the good development of the pupils' skills through interesting, practical activity. The pupils' good progress is seen in this year's national assessments at the end of Year 2, which are above average, and include a positive improvement in the number of pupils attaining above average standards in writing.



The improved and broadly average attainment evident in Year 6 national assessments this year show acceleration in pupils' achievement, bringing it to a satisfactory level over time. These show a particularly good improvement in pupils' achievement in science and reading, across the range of abilities. Improved teaching, with an emphasis on developing pupils' creativity and expression in writing and on promoting their interest in mathematics by showing them the relevance of their work, is also accelerating progress, especially for more able pupils. Efforts to bridge gaps in the skills of lower and average attaining pupils are having a positive effect, but have not yet been as successful. While good progress in lessons has been secured in classes in Years 5 and 6, progress still varies at times in Years 3 and 4. This is still the case when work is not always matched closely enough to the pupils' abilities. As a result, weaknesses in pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills, such as handwriting, blending letter sounds, spelling and in calculating using numbers, remain, slowing the progress of a minority of pupils as they move through Years 3 to 6.

The appointment of new teachers, moving teachers into different classes to form stronger year group teams by sharing expertise, rigorous monitoring of lessons and supportive professional development are improving the quality of teaching. Teachers are now better equipped to meet the differing learning needs of pupils.

Improved outdoor facilities for children in Nursery and Reception classes and more effective use of teaching assistants in Years 1 and 2 classes to help with reading and writing are quickening pupils' progress. In Years 3 to 6, as in other classes, teachers are using assessments of pupils' work more effectively to inform their planning and to match learning objectives to pupils' abilities. Teachers have also improved the quality of the written feedback they give to pupils when marking their work and use 'Learning Journey Assessments' effectively to record their achievements.

Most teachers are also strengthening learning by giving pupils targets for improvement and placing a greater emphasis on pupils working in groups and sharing ideas with each other as 'learning buddies' rather than, as previously, in whole-class sessions, where their concentration slipped. However, despite improvement, the task of establishing such good practice in all classes, especially in mathematics, remains.

The school now has secure strategies for evaluating the quality of provision, especially the quality of teaching, and is implementing these well to accelerate pupils' achievements. This is because, following the last inspection, leaders and managers, with close support from local authority advisers and consultants, have worked diligently to implement comprehensive action plans to tackle the areas identified for improvement. The local authority statement of action fulfils the requirements and their officers, including the School Improvement Partner, have undertaken their duties effectively. Action plans are well considered and advisers continue to work supportively with the school. Governors have strengthened their



monitoring roles quite significantly, especially through their support of the senior staff, as a result of their regular 'Action Plan Monitoring Committee' deliberations. The headteacher and her senior colleagues are committed to improvement and have worked effectively with governors and local authority advisers. Senior staff have taken steps to empower colleagues and there is a strengthened team approach to the monitoring and evaluation of provision and its influence on pupils' achievement. In response to increasingly challenging teaching, pupils now show more interest and commitment as learners. They read for enjoyment and express their ideas in writing. The next step for leaders is to make sure that pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills are improved to equally good effect in all classes and that the momentum of improvement is continued.

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

Alex Baxter
Additional Inspector