

Tribal Education  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0845 123 6001  
Direct F 0845 123 6002  
email:sarah.cartlidge@tribalgroup.com

12 July 2010

Mrs N Barrand  
The Headteacher  
Thomas Arnold Primary School  
Rowdowns Road  
Dagenham  
Essex  
RM9 6NH

Dear Mrs Barrand

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 July 2010, 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 those teachers in Years 1, 2 and 6 we observed and the members of the senior leadership and inclusion teams with whom I held discussions.

As a result of the inspection on 8 July 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve pupils' progress in speaking, reading and writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2
- improve the teaching of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English
- raise attendance
- develop the monitoring role of subject leaders.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Many children enter the Nursery with levels of skill and knowledge which are below those expected for their age. This is particularly true of their communication and language skills. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. In 2009 pupils have made the best progress in English and the school's tracking data suggest this upward trend has been maintained. Teacher assessments indicate that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now making better progress in reading and pupils in Year 1 are making good progress in writing. Attainment at the end of Year 2 rose in 2009, particularly in reading. School data for the current cohort indicate that attainment in reading is likely to fall, while in writing it is likely to rise, with a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3.

Evidence from observations of teaching and learning indicates that, with the support of the local authority, the school has implemented a number of strategies to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. These strategies are beginning to have an impact and pupils are now confident and eager contributors to lessons. However, opportunities to widen engagement are not always identified, and chances for pupils to discuss their work in pairs or small groups are sometimes passed over. When this happens the pace of learning slows, although pupils remain well focused on their tasks. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good or better. Pupils now successfully apply their phonic skills in practical situations. In a Year 1 literacy lesson one pupil successfully used his knowledge of letters and sounds to decode an unfamiliar word. In another, pupils used their increasing knowledge to have a go at a difficult spelling.

Those pupils who speak a home language other than English now make good progress. By the end of Year 2 the standards they reach are similar to those found nationally, while by the end of Year 6 they do better than similar pupils. This is because of good tracking systems and effective interventions by the inclusion team. Data indicate that the progress of many pupils starting the school with little or no English is particularly rapid.

The school has worked closely with families, the Department for Education and the local authority to improve attendance. It has been particularly successful in reducing the number of pupils who are persistent absentees, down from 15 in 2009 to 9. Attendance now has a high profile within the school. There are regular updates for pupils and parents, certificates and applause for individuals who do well, and a monthly trophy for the class with the best overall attendance. Attendance has risen by just over 1% since 2009 but, in spite of the school's determined efforts, remains stubbornly low.

At the time of the last inspection the subject leaders in English, mathematics and science were new to their posts and had limited opportunities to monitor pupils' progress, and teaching and learning. Due to staff changes this is again the case. All three subject leaders are new or very new to their posts. The senior leadership team is also relatively new, with just under half joining the team during the current academic year. In spite of this, attainment is rising. This is because the headteacher, staff and governors share a determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards.

The school development plan is generally well structured and identifies appropriate areas for improvement. However, success criteria linked to areas for improvement identified at the last inspection are not sufficiently measurable, so that the expected impact of actions is unclear. This makes it difficult for the school to be held properly to account, or for the school to know which actions have been most successful.

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

Robert Lovett  
Her Majesty's Inspector