

Tribal  
1-4 Portland  
Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01179456274  
Daniel.Towl@ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs Caroline Polley  
Mountford Manor Primary and Nursery School  
Bothwell Road  
Walcot  
Swindon  
SN3 3EZ

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 February 2010.

There have been no significant changes to the characteristics of the school since the last inspection. Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

At the last inspection the school was asked to:

- raise standards in English mathematics and science
- make better use of assessment information to plan lessons
- ensure marking clearly shows what pupils need to do to improve
- provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons.

Since the last inspection there has been improvement in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, though attainment in science dipped in the most recent tests. Overall attainment remains below average. There is most improvement in English, which has been a particular focus of development. A concerted effort over the last two years to improve the quality of pupils' writing has been successful. This has benefited all pupils and especially the boys. There is a consistent approach to teaching writing throughout the school and all classrooms now provide a helpful, literate learning environment. In mathematics pupils have improved their skills in calculation and the school is now focusing on developing their abilities to use and apply mathematics, especially through problem-solving. While pupils' overall progress has improved during the last two years, the school has not yet managed to secure the consistent and accelerated progress needed to raise standards more quickly. Last year there were a high number of pupils in Year 6 who joined at various



times in Key Stage 2. Most of these pupils made more rapid progress than they had done in their previous schools. Senior leaders and all teachers use information from assessment more rigorously to measure and check the progress of pupils. The school analyses more carefully the progress of a number of different groups of pupils. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively with a range of strategies; for example some pupils follow a reading recovery scheme. In the 2009 KS2 tests the small group of pupils from Black and minority ethnic groups made slightly better progress overall than other pupils.

There is greater consistency in the way in which teachers mark pupils' work. It is more common for teachers to write comments in books to help pupils improve. Pupils say they find the comments useful. Older pupils are very aware of their learning targets and can explain, for example, what they need to do to reach the higher levels of writing. Target-setting is more firmly based on evidence from assessment, but pupils' individual longer-term targets are not always sufficiently challenging considering their starting points.

The schools' own monitoring shows that teaching and planning has improved and is good in most lessons. Lesson plans have activities identified for higher attainers. Teaching has improved and has a number of good elements. These are:

- Good use of questioning to engage pupils in whole-class sessions.
- The opportunities for pupils to talk with each other to discuss their tasks and ideas.
- The excellent attitude of most pupils and their willingness to engage with their tasks.

The involvement of pupils in class discussions and more opportunities to talk together in lessons has successfully helped to improve their speaking and listening skills. This is evident in the way older pupils are confident in conversation.

The headteacher and senior leaders are all clear about the need to raise standards and are fully involved in monitoring the quality of the school's work, in particular pupils' rates of progress. Governors, too, have a clearer view about what needs to be achieved. Some senior teachers have had training to develop their leadership skills, which is beneficial for their role in supporting other staff throughout the school. These developments, including a more rigorous use of self-evaluation, are successfully increasing the capacity of the management to secure higher standards and quicker progress for pupils. However, the school has yet to achieve a longer-term track record of improvement.

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

Daniel Towl  
Her Majesty's Inspector

