

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
BRISTOL
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk
Direct T 0845 123 6001
Direct F 0117 315 0430
email: sarah.cartlidge@tribalgroup.com



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Miss V Upton
Headteacher
Petts Hill Primary School
Newmarket Avenue
Northolt
UB5 4HB

Dear Miss Upton

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Petts Hill Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 February 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my particular thanks to those members of the senior leadership team with whom I met and to those Year 6 pupils who gave up some time to talk to me. Please also let Year 2 know how much I enjoyed their assembly.

Since the school was last inspected an on-site children's centre, managed by the school's governing body, has opened. The school is currently receiving support from City Challenge intended to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards. The school is part of the 'Place2Be', a national project intended to help meet the emotional and social needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Staffing is now relatively stable.

As a result of the inspection on 25 November 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter. 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.

The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 fell in 2010 and was low in both English and mathematics. This is in part a reflection of the low starting points of the particular group of pupils but is also due to the slow progress they made from the time they entered. Since then the quality of teaching throughout the school has improved so that most is now good and some is outstanding. In consequence almost all pupils are now doing better, progress is accelerating and standards are beginning to rise. In lessons observed pupils made good progress. They are enthusiastic learners with positive attitudes to work. They settle quickly, listen carefully and work



with sustained concentration. Teachers have high expectations about what pupils are able to do and how they should behave. Pupils share these expectations and behaviour is consistently good; they say that learning is fun and 'in this school nothing is boring'. Since the school was last inspected the creative curriculum has had time to develop and pupils and teachers talk about it with huge enthusiasm. Cross-curricular links are increasingly evident and pupils are fulsome in their praise for the opportunities it provides to apply their writing skills in other subjects. The creative curriculum is having a significant impact on pupils' confidence, enthusiasm for learning, and achievement. It is also building on the already good partnership with parents and carers and involving them directly in their children's learning through the projects completed at home.

Pupils' progress is carefully monitored through the twice-termly progress meetings, where the achievement of each pupil is discussed and targets for improvement set. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are now well established and are used effectively to provide individualised support. Pupils spoken to were very enthusiastic about the 1:1 support in English and mathematics and certain about the impact it has in respect of their achievement. All of the pupils spoken to said it had improved their National Curriculum levels. Pupils know what their targets for improvement are and welcome the opportunity to be involved in assessing their progress against these. While marking is good at celebrating pupils' achievements and giving praise, it does not consistently tell pupils clearly what they need to do to improve. Even where this does happen it is not always referred to in subsequent marking. This is a lost opportunity as marking is used very well to promote dialogue with pupils.

The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear focus on improving outcomes for pupils and are well placed to ensure the current rate of improvement is sustained. The school plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement and a range of measurable success criteria, many linked to raising achievement, but opportunities to benchmark progress along the way are not always grasped as firmly as they might be. Safeguarding arrangements comply fully with statutory requirements.

The local authority improvement partner, together with advisors from City Challenge, has provided effective support for improving teaching and learning through joint collaborative reviews. The link with an outstanding school, facilitated by City Challenge, has made a significant contribution to supporting and validating the work of the school and the improvements it is making.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett, Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2009

- Improve achievement in Years 1 to 6 in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do
 - making effective use of the new creative curriculum to provide exciting opportunities for writing in other subjects
 - providing a wide range of practical, realistic mathematical tasks, including enterprise opportunities for older pupils.

- Help pupils to make better progress in their work by:
 - ensuring that marking consistently helps them to improve
 - tracking their achievements regularly to identify any pupils falling behind
 - involving all pupils more fully in assessing how well they are doing.