

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



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Miss Suzie Milligan
Headteacher
Milborne Port Primary School
Milborne Port
Sherborne
Dorset
DT9 5EP

Dear Miss Milligan

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Milborne Port Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

After the previous inspection, the school's leadership structure was changed and an acting deputy headteacher was appointed from the staff temporarily for one year. A new deputy headteacher was recruited in the summer term and started at the beginning of September 2010. The Chair of the Governing Body also changed in September 2010.

As a result of the inspection on 30 April 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. This visit focused on the impact of the leadership team and pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics. Progress in improving science was not explored.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has developed a more coherent management structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The middle leaders have started to develop their roles. However, the leadership team's drive to improve the consistency of pupils' progress has not been sufficiently rigorous. The unevenness in pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 identified at the last inspection remains, particularly in Years 3 and 4. There is also some underachievement in Years 1 and 2.



In 2009, attainment in Year 6 did not improve as expected and results of the national tests declined in both English and mathematics. However, there was improvement in Year 6 in 2010 with a marked rise in writing results. Writing has been a priority area for the school for several years and the school's strategies are having some impact but these are not consistently embedded across the school. Attainment in writing at Year 2 is much weaker and standards fell in 2010, with no pupils reaching the higher Level 3.

Although assessment data show that attainment in mathematics is improving, the rate of pupils' progress is not fast enough. The school's 2009 assessments show fewer pupils in the current Years 4, 5 and 6 working at the expected levels in mathematics than should be the case. As at the previous inspection, the inconsistency in pupils' progress remains, and as a result, this still leaves a lot of work to cover in Year 6. The leadership of mathematics has not been sufficiently focused on raising standards and improving pupils' progress. Actions to improve provision have been slower than intended. For instance, the last inspection report noted that the curriculum plans for mathematics were to be reviewed last year. This did not occur and has been put back to this year.

The school recognises that standards should be higher by Year 6 and has rightly identified this as a key priority. Over the last academic year, the school has refined the systems for tracking pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, the meetings to review pupils' progress, class by class, now occur half-termly rather than termly. These are positive developments. However, these improvements are not yet leading to better and more consistent achievement across the school. In addition, although pupils leave the Reception class with above average attainment, teachers are not yet using the assessment information rigorously to match work to pupils' needs and, therefore, to accelerate their progress. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They show a keenness to work hard and try their best and the majority are confident and articulate.

The leadership team does not draw upon a wide range of methods to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress between the half-termly progress reviews. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' ongoing work, for example, are not used well to promote pupils' learning. There is limited evaluation of the quality and pace of pupils' learning. As a result, the school has a more positive view of the overall quality of teaching than is the case.

During the monitoring visit, effective teaching was observed in Year 6. However, evidence from lessons and scrutiny of pupils' books indicates variability in the quality of teaching in the school as a whole. Teachers do not routinely draw on a wide range of strategies to test and build pupils' understanding during lessons and books show that expectations are sometimes too low. It is not always clear from teachers' plans what pupils of differing abilities will learn in the lesson. Consequently, in many cases, all pupils complete the same work even though assessment information shows that some are capable of more demanding tasks. The approach to teaching

younger pupils about how sounds are built up to make words is not consistent between the Reception class and Years 1 and 2.

The local authority provides satisfactory support and challenge through regular visits by the School Improvement Partner. It is only recently that the reports from the local authority have emphasised the need to address the underachievement in some year groups and to place a high priority on raising expectations and driving forward improvements. The local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body are aware that some minor administrative improvements are needed in the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils. Plans are in place to address these quickly and training for the new Chair of the Governing Body has already been scheduled.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2010

- Review leadership roles and responsibilities and establish an effective senior team to support the new headteacher in improving achievement and raising standards across the school.

- Use the strategies that have been successful in improving literacy skills, especially target setting with pupils, as a model of good practice for improving skills in mathematics and science.