

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
BRISTOL  
BS2 8RR

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



3 February 2011

Mrs Jacqueline Laver  
The Headteacher  
Priory School  
Orchard Avenue  
Slough  
Berkshire  
SL1 6HE

Dear Mrs Laver

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Priory School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 February 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. In particular, I would like to thank the governors and the local authority adviser for coming in to school to meet with me.

Since the inspection the senior management team has been restructured following the departure of one of the assistant headteachers and the literacy subject leader. The number on roll has increased to 767 pupils. Three fifths of the pupils are from a mixture of ethnic backgrounds and the remainder are from White British backgrounds. About one third have English as an additional language. Over one fifth of the pupils are admitted to the school at times other than the usual time of entry. At the start of this academic year the number of Reception classes increased from three to four.

As a result of the inspection on 3 and 4 December 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Whilst standards remain significantly above the national average at the end of Year 2, the effect of pupil mobility into the school from Year 3 onwards is a significant factor in the overall average performance of pupils at the end of Year 6. Following the adoption of a commercial programme which enables users to analyse data in



depth, the school is now able to track rigorously the progress of all of its pupils from their time of entry into school. Pupils who are underachieving are now quickly identified. This has enabled them to provide good quality additional support, such as individual tuition and focused group work, which are tailored to meet the needs of all those pupils who are underachieving. Refining the ability groups for English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 has ensured that teachers sensitively tailor their planning for specific pupils. The provision of additional activities also ensures that no learning time is lost for the pupils who might work at a faster pace. For example, the gifted and talented pupils and those who are more able are provided with extension tasks to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils who have English as an additional language benefit from extra sessions which prepare them well for their literacy lessons.

Pupils develop into mature, articulate and responsible young people who are incredibly proud of their school. They feel extremely well looked after and know that there is always an adult they can share their problems with. Behaviour in and around the school is impeccable. Pupils are extremely tolerant of each others differences but fully understand that they all have a right to air their opinions and be respected by others. As one pupil summed up, 'We all have a place here – we all belong.'

As a result of the robust and consistent approach to lesson observations by senior leaders and the governing body, the quality of the teaching profile has improved significantly. Most lessons move along at a good pace and there is a suitable balance between teacher and pupil input. All lessons are well planned and this ensures that all the pupils know what they should achieve by the end of the session. This helps them evaluate their own learning. Pupils are very clear about the targets they are given for improvement and older pupils have a good understanding about the levels they are working at in relation to the national norm. The outstanding quality of the displays in classrooms and in and around the school exemplifies the stimulating curriculum which excites the pupils in their learning. For instance, 'Fairy Tales' are brought to life through three-dimensional displays and replicas of modern sculptures, created by the pupils. This enables the pupils to appreciate, experience and reflect on the scale and perspective of these great works.

Provision for the Nursery and Reception children remain a strong feature of the school, with exciting and motivating activities on offer. The extensive development of the outdoor area, which is now used as an integral part of the school day, has successfully addressed the issues raised in relation to its use at the time of the last inspection.

Senior leaders and managers have developed a greater understanding of accountability and data are used well to monitor many aspects of the school's performance. For example, pupil progress is not only monitored between key stages but within year groups so that any inconsistencies in teaching can be quickly picked up and rectified. Attendance issues are rapidly identified and the information gained



from the electronic registers promotes a competitive approach to regular attendance amongst the pupils, with coveted prizes each week.

The governors have been tenacious in addressing the areas of development since the inspection. They have increased their visits to school and individual governors have formed effective links with year groups. By undertaking additional governor training, attending staff meetings and school in-service courses, they have gained a greater understanding of the work of the school and now offer greater levels of support and challenge. They demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the quality of teaching and are empathetic to the challenges faced by the teaching staff. The governors' strong commitment to developing an open culture and a growing partnership with parents and carers is demonstrated well by their raised profile on the website, in and around school, and in their increased availability to talk through problems and concerns.

Parents and carers talk positively about the improvements which have been made to enhance the links between home and school. They report that the parent/teacher consultations now focus much more on the achievement of their children. The regular written reports they receive provide a detailed account of the rate of progress being made by their children. Parents and carers particularly welcome the class run by the school where they are given ways to help their children with mathematical techniques they may be using when completing their homework. The introduction of a text messaging service to parents and carers, that provides them with up-to-date and immediate information, has been heralded as a real success. Sending letters and other school information home by email has also been received well by parents and carers who feel that this helps them to be much better informed.

The school has made very good use of high quality support from external consultants. The School Improvement Partner has also challenged the senior leaders and governors in their drive to raise standards.

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

Lorna Brackstone  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009**

- Improve achievement of all pupils, but particularly those in Key Stage 2, by 2010 through:
  - using data to pinpoint groups that are underachieving
  - quickly implementing specific interventions to accelerate their progress.
- Secure greater consistency in the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - all pupils are clear about the aim of the lesson and understand what they need to do to succeed
  - lessons move along at a smarter pace and there is an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that leaders at all levels rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives for improvement on pupils' learning and progress
  - increasing the strategic role of the governing body and strengthening the degree to which it challenges the school
  - strengthening partnerships between the school, including the governing body, and parents.