

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 0117 311 5307
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Direct email: Emma.Thomson@tribalgroup.com

15 February 2013

Mr M Middlemore
Head of Primary Learning
Tregolls School – an Academy
Chellow Road
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 1LH

Dear Mr Middlemore

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Tregolls School – an Academy

Following my visit with Grahame Sherfield HMI to your academy on Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised a wide range of evidence. They reviewed a number of documents, including strategic plans, safeguarding arrangements, attendance and assessment data, monitoring and behaviour records and curriculum planning. Meetings were held with the head of primary learning, the executive headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, pupils and parents. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and on the playground. Teaching was observed in 17 lessons or group activities. Four observations were undertaken jointly with the head of primary learning. Inspectors heard some pupils reading and scrutinised work from Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all pupils.

Context

In September 2012, Penair School sponsored the establishment of the Tregolls School – an Academy to replace the predecessor school which, at its previous inspection in June 2011, had been judged to require special measures. In the period leading up to the opening of the academy the predecessor school was led by an acting headteacher, following the resignation of the then headteacher earlier in the 2011/12 school year. A head of primary learning was recruited to lead the school and has been in post since the academy opened. The headteacher of the sponsor school is also the executive headteacher of the academy. A new governing body has been established with a core group, including the chair, members of which are also governors at the sponsor school.

Since the academy opened two members of the teaching staff have left the school and increasing pupil numbers have meant that an extra class has been created. At the time of the monitoring inspection a new leader of the area resource base, which provides specialist teaching for pupils who have special educational needs, had been appointed to start at the school after Easter. The process was also underway for the recruitment of an assistant headteacher to work in Key Stage 2.

The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or pupils with a parent serving in the armed forces, is well above the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is well above average. Their needs include severe learning difficulties and specialist teaching is available at the school through the area resource base.

Achievement of pupils at the academy

Over a number of years, pupils at the predecessor school attained well below expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics and progress was variable. The results for the national tests in summer 2012, before the academy opened, showed some improvement in the outcomes for Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics but the standards reached by Year 2 pupils showed a continuing declining trend. Since the establishment of the academy, there are positive indicators of a general improvement in pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils' progress in reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have benefited from a strengthened focus on phonics (linking letters to the sounds that they make). Well-planned reading support programmes also benefit less-able pupils in Key Stage 2. As a result of this work, together with support for improvements in writing, there are signs of a clear improvement in pupils' progress and attainment in reading and writing. In mathematics, although assessment tracking shows

improvement in the progress made by pupils, this is not as strong as in reading or writing in both Key Stages 1 and 2.

The school's progress tracking systems are clear and robust. Systems reflect the effective support of staff from the sponsor school over the last 18 months to develop and refine them. There are regular reviews of the progress made by individuals, groups and classes which are carefully analysed by the head of primary learning, although currently this does not focus as effectively on the higher attaining groups as on others. Teachers are now more confident in the use of progress data in order to provide support and challenge in their lesson planning. The school has challenging attainment targets which, if met, especially for Year 6, will close the gap with age-related national expectations. Inspection evidence confirms that there is a clear drive towards meeting the challenging targets set across all year groups.

A strong feature of the school is the integration of the disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who attend the area resource base into classes across the school. These pupils, together with pupils with special educational needs within the mainstream classes, have their progress monitored carefully. This is also the case for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The indications are that all of these groups are making improved progress, in line with all pupils.

The quality of teaching

Improvements in pupils' progress are reflected in the development of the quality of teaching. Teachers show greater confidence in the use of assessment and tracking systems to develop sharply focused activities for particular groups of pupils, for example those with special educational needs. In the most effective lessons, teaching is well matched to pupils' needs and their previous learning. In these lessons the pace of learning is brisk because planning is well structured and teachers use questioning well to check on pupils' learning and adjust activities accordingly. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning and particularly the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding in practical activities. The broader curriculum which is being developed has helped to reinforce pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents say that the quality of communication with teachers through the parent partnership group has improved since the academy was opened.

However, although clear progress has been made in addressing long-standing weaknesses in teaching, there is still work to do to ensure that it is consistently good or better. Where teaching is weaker there can be too much time spent by the teacher in explaining the task with the result that the pupils do not have sufficient time to practise and develop their skills and understanding. Additionally, opportunities can be lost when the assessment criteria for work do not involve the pupils sufficiently, so that they do not fully understand what is required. Sometimes, questioning focuses on one group and not the full range of pupils.

Marking is regular and positive. Pupils understand the policy of 'tickled pink' and 'green for growth' used in their books. There is less evidence of marking identifying

pupils' next steps in their learning and some of the recently introduced pupil recorded response sheets in books are not fully completed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour observed in classrooms and around the school during the inspection was consistently good. There are effective behaviour management systems and policies in place. Parents say that behaviour has improved since the academy opened and exclusions have reduced during the same period. Pupils report that they feel safe and happy at the academy. They display positive attitudes towards their learning, and these are reflected in the improvement in attendance, which was previously well below average. Latest data show it to be close to the national figure.

Relationships within the academy are strong. This is particularly noticeable in the way that the pupils who attend the area resource base are included in most activities and supported by the older pupils at the academy.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

Since the academy opened, the executive headteacher and head of primary learning have worked in a strong partnership to build on the improvements made during the previous year. The head of primary learning has a strong focus on the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning. There is secure evidence that this is having an impact and teachers are more confident in planning challenging activities that meet pupils' needs. The role of subject leaders is developing with more involvement in the analysis of data and the monitoring of teaching. Rigorous monitoring is developing clear strategies to support teachers and link this work to their performance management. A clear system is in place to develop links with parents and this is effective in securing parents' views.

Strategic planning is clear and developing a strong connection with robust data analysis and monitoring evidence. Priorities are appropriate with ambitious targets and measurable success criteria. As a result, the academy has a good capacity to improve further. The curriculum is being developed to ensure pupils use their understanding and skills in a wider range of activities, linked to the application of literacy and numeracy skills. All safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

The governing body was established when the academy opened with a core group who are also governors of the sponsor school. This has enabled clear direction and a focus on improvement. Governors have a good understanding of their role and are developing stronger links with subject leaders.

External support

The academy has made effective use of a range of external support and partnerships to help in its drive to improve the quality of education and pupils'

attainment. Foremost in this has been the support provided by the sponsor school, particularly in terms of finance, personnel and premises management. The transfer to academy status was handled smoothly. The academy also uses the expertise of advanced skills teachers based at the sponsor school. Local authority services are used to promote good attendance and for specialist support for the area resource base. The academy is part of a learning community of local schools, which provides effective curriculum and primary phase support.

Priorities for further improvement

- Develop the analysis of attainment and progress further in order to support an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels.
- Ensure that the improvement in attendance is sustained.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner
Her Majesty's Inspector