

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 5319
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Direct email: matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com

19 March 2013

Mrs Sue Collins
Headteacher
Brookside Junior School
Dagnam Park Drive
Romford
RM3 9DJ

Dear Mrs Collins

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Brookside Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 19 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair and three members of the Governing Body, the headteacher from the partner school, Scotts Primary School, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. The lead inspector visited a number of classes with the headteacher.

Context

Two temporary teachers left the school last term. The deputy headteacher is now teaching Year 4. A new assistant headteacher, with responsibility for leading mathematics, has been appointed and will join the school after Easter. There are discussions taking place about the school becoming an academy in 2013/14.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders and governors have responded quickly to the recommendations for improvement from the recent inspection. The school's action plan addresses each recommendation and includes specific targets, success criteria, responsibilities and deadlines to test how quickly improvement takes place. While the action plan states targets for pupils' attainment and progress, these targets are not always linked to regular check points or dates when leaders meet with teachers for meetings about pupils' progress. HMI discussed with senior leaders and governors how the plan might, for example, include more specific targets for pupils in each class who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families). Governors and senior leaders are devising how to track and evaluate the use and impact of the pupil premium. The headteacher and Chair of Governors have made a positive start to this work but it needs to gather pace and become a regular feature of governing body meetings; governors have not yet analysed how well this additional funding reduces gaps in pupils' achievement.

With support from local authority advisers and the headteacher at Scotts Primary School, senior leaders are putting in place training to help teachers improve their planning and teaching of mathematics. Teachers from Brookside visit Scotts Primary School to watch mathematics lessons. They are working with colleagues at Scotts to plan lessons jointly and learn more about how they help pupils apply mathematical concepts across the subjects they learn. This reciprocal relationship is continuing into the summer term and the headteachers are planning for teachers from Scotts to visit Brookside and work with teachers in lessons.

Leaders are regularly monitoring lessons and scrutinising pupils' work to measure how quickly progress is improving, especially in mathematics and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. During the inspection the lead inspector talked to pupils in lessons. They say they are now enjoying their mathematics work. A few pupils commented that they understand much more because they receive help through detailed feedback in their books. Some pupils want more challenging work and are ready to try harder tasks and at a quicker pace. Others lack confidence and are not yet able to work out how a concept such as probability might be used in other subjects. Senior leaders accept that better progress is starting to emerge but there is not yet the consistently good mathematics teaching that is needed to remedy underachievement.

Teachers have been set new targets with which to judge their performance. Governors recognise that their scrutiny of the quality of teaching over time, of the link to teachers' pay and promotion and of the impact on pupils' achievement has yet to bring together different pieces of information from senior leaders in a sufficiently robust way.

The governing body is forthright in setting high expectations of leaders to improve the school. Governors are realistic in facing the challenges that lie ahead for the next 12 months. They have been proactive in setting up a new parent forum to help parents work together to ask questions and share their ideas for school improvement. Governors are beginning to analyse achievement data for pupils supported by pupil premium and local authority advisers are helping with this work. Governors have audited their skills and knowledge to assess what training they need, but to strengthen their work HMI recommends that an external review of governance is completed. The local authority has led a training session for governors to develop their skills in understanding published data about the schools' performance.

The local authority continues to offer good support to the school and is committed to supporting the review of governance. The partnership support with the headteacher and the staff at Scotts Primary School, brokered by the local authority, is benefitting Brookside. Through monthly meetings of a monitoring board the local authority is checking rigorously the progress of the school.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Havering. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector