

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 5359
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

9 May 2013

Mr M Hawkins
Headteacher
Stoberry Park School
North Road
Wells
BA5 2TJ

Dear Mr Hawkins

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Stoberry Park School, Somerset

Following my visit to your school on 8 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this visit, in addition to our meeting and the learning walk around the school that we carried out together, I held discussions with members of the governing body. I met with a National Leader of Education that is supporting the school on behalf of the local authority. I evaluated the school's action plan and scrutinised relevant documentation including the records of meetings of the governing body and monitoring visits undertaken by governors.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been no important changes in staffing or in the context of the school.

Main findings

The school's senior leaders have established a set of action plans swiftly and taken personal responsibility for tackling a specific issue. There are clear monitoring arrangements in place to inform regular evaluations against success criteria. While the plans address the most important issues carefully, they do not set out clearly enough how the school will improve marking and pupils' understanding of their learning. The increased ambition of senior leaders and governors can be seen in the higher expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve. Leaders now track pupils' progress more carefully. However, a summary of the end-of-year targets has not been incorporated into the action plan and set alongside interim milestones so it is difficult to see whether the rate of improvement is fast enough.

Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage, supported by a Specialist Leader of Education from a local primary school, have improved children's access to purposeful play and learning activities. For example, the outdoor area has been extended and reorganised so that children have more opportunities to make choices and develop independence. The school has made several changes to the way that it teaches writing including giving pupils weekly opportunities for sustained writing. There is encouraging evidence that these changes have improved the quantity and quality of pupils' writing.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders visit lessons more frequently to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. However, the records of their visits do not report clearly enough how well different groups of pupils are achieving. Leaders have not reviewed individual performance objectives with staff to ensure that they take enough account of the school's most pressing issues.

The school has taken prompt action to improve the information it provides to parents. The number of parent/teacher consultations has been increased and plans are well advanced to make information about pupils' achievement more accessible.

Members of the governing body know what the school is doing to tackle its key issues. This is because governors have been involved in drafting the action plan and are beginning to check the progress that the school is making more often. However, the records of meetings and monitoring visits do not show clearly enough how governors gain a better understanding of the school's work and ensure that senior leaders account for the school's performance. While plans are in place to commission an external review of the work of the governing body, the governing body has already taken swift action to improve governors' understanding of data.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, I recommended that further action is taken to:

- review, and amend if necessary, the objectives agreed with staff to improve their performance
- strengthen the action plan by setting out how the school will improve marking and pupils' understanding of their learning; and include a summary of the end-of year targets and interim milestones for improvement
- ensure that the records of monitoring by the governing body and subsequent meetings show how governors gain a better understanding the school's work and hold leaders to account
- ensure that the records of lesson observations comment specifically on the learning and progress for different groups of pupils.

I also agreed to arrange for you and the Chair of the Governing Body to attend an Ofsted 'Getting to good' seminar. Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school has drawn effectively on external support to start tackling the weaknesses arising from the last inspection. The National Leader of Education knows the school well and has challenged the school effectively. The impact of her support is evident in leaders' raised expectations of the progress that pupils should make. A Specialist Leader of Education has worked effectively with staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve the learning environment for the youngest children.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector