

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5359  
**Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

19 June 2013

Charmain Hitchin  
Headteacher  
Beacon Primary School  
Davis Road  
Willenhall  
WV12 5HA

Dear Ms Hitchin

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Beacon Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, representatives from the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including feedback to teachers following lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work, and the latest information about pupils' achievement. During this visit, you and the deputy headteacher joined me on brief visits to some classes to talk to pupils and review their mathematics work.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes since the recent inspection which judged the school to require improvement.

## **Main findings**

You are responding to the issues identified in the recent inspection with determination. You are acting upon the advice of your local authority adviser and external consultants to make the necessary changes. The teaching of mathematics is improving across the school. Pupils' work shows that some pupils are now making good progress in this subject. Many pupils spoke enthusiastically about the different types of number problems they have to solve. Teachers are encouraging pupils to use appropriate equipment and different strategies to find answers to more difficult mathematical questions. Although activities for more-able pupils are becoming more challenging, pupils' work shows that in some lessons they are not moved onto new learning quickly enough.

You and other senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' work. Feedback to teachers identifies successful practice and where further improvements are required. When weaknesses are identified you make arrangements for teachers to observe effective practice and for pupils to receive targeted support. However, when providing class teachers with written feedback about their work, senior leaders do not always identify the detailed actions that teachers need to take to help different groups of pupils make faster progress.

Members of the governing body have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities because of the local authority's review of governance. Governors are asking searching and relevant questions about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They are beginning to check that the actions in the school improvement plan are helping to raise pupils' achievement. The systems for collating and recording information about pupils' learning and the quality of teaching are overly complicated. As a result senior leaders are not always able to provide governors with a concise summary of the difference they are making to pupils' learning and the quality of teaching.

The revised school improvement plan includes suitable actions to improve the quality of teaching and the work of senior leaders. The plan does not always have measurable success criteria and does not clearly state who will monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions in the plan.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- make sure that mathematical activities for more-able pupils always provide a sufficient level of challenge

- work with the local authority to ensure senior leaders provide governors with a concise summary of the difference they are making to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching so that governors can rigorously hold them to account
- include measurable criteria in the school improvement plan and clearly state who will monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions in the plan.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Through the local authority partnership review group meetings and the regular visits from the local authority adviser you receive an appropriate level of support and challenge. The local authority adviser has helped you to focus on the main areas of weakness and take suitable action. Teachers have also benefited from the mathematics training provided by external consultants. This training has contributed to better rates of progress for pupils in mathematics. You, together with other senior leaders, have recently started to work with two experienced headteachers in order to further strengthen leadership.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Walsall.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

**Her Majesty's Inspector**