

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 5323  
Direct email: [suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com](mailto:suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com)



28 June 2013

Mr Ron Highman  
Acting Headteacher  
East Farleigh Primary School  
Vicarage Lane  
East Farleigh  
Maidstone  
ME15 0LY

Dear Mr Highman

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to East Farleigh Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the executive headteacher, the senior teacher, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I toured the school, briefly observing lessons and looking at examples of pupils' work. I evaluated the school improvement plan and considered other evidence you provided, including the data showing how much progress pupils are making.

### **Context**

Since the inspection, the school's substantive headteacher has returned to work, after an extended period of absence caused by illness. He is currently the executive headteacher. From September, he will be headteacher and you will be deputy headteacher.

## **Main findings**

The inspection, and a local authority review not long before it, had the effect of galvanising improvement action. You, the substantive headteacher and the staff and governors, recognise that the school needs to sharpen some of its work. Members of staff work positively together and are supportive of each other. Informative records are kept of the improvement work you have undertaken. You, working in a productive partnership with the substantive headteacher have together made a good start in making the necessary changes.

The Governing Body has piloted the school well through the uncertain period caused by the substantive headteacher's absence. The governors I met know the school well. They are excited by the challenges ahead and ask astute, challenging questions of you and other school leaders. The Governing Body has helpfully sharpened and quickened some of its processes by, for example, simplifying the committee structure. Governors have made a number of internal staff promotions and appointments in recent times, providing continuity. You and the governors realise, however, that it is important for the school also to have an external perspective. In the last few months, you have made good use of the insights of a consultant you have bought in.

You and the substantive headteacher are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching across the school and lead useful work to improve its quality. This work is well-focused on quickening the pace of lessons and helping staff to ask more searching and thought-provoking questions of pupils. Teachers are setting work in lessons that is better matched to the needs of each pupil. This is to ensure that all pupils receive challenging work which is just right for them. We agreed that this final strand of work is very important and needs a sustained focus again next year in order to raise pupils' attainment further.

The senior teacher, who is special educational needs co-ordinator, contributes well to regular, more sharply focused, meetings in which you and each teacher discuss how well every pupil, in each class, is progressing. This ensures teachers are accountable for how well their pupils do and are helped when there are any problems. You have improved the way you manage and interpret the data which shows pupils' progress. Pupils are doing better than they were earlier in the year but there is still ground for them to catch up. It is unlikely that the current Year 6 cohort will do as well in their national assessments as they should. However, the cohorts in Years 4 and 5 are on track to do better. Across the school, the relatively small number of pupils entitled to free school meals, and therefore pupil premium funding, are not doing as well as the others. Reducing or removing this gap must be a key priority for the next phase of improvement.

We discussed in some detail what the school's leadership structure should be from September. There are well-thought out plans for a senior leadership team of three, with sensibly chosen responsibilities for each member. Similarly, the roles of key

stage leaders are well-defined. However, we agreed that there is more to do to ensure that there is strong leadership across all the subjects. Pupils enjoy a broad curriculum, work independently, and take real responsibility for their own learning. However, you cannot yet show exactly how well pupils are doing in every subject, or that the work and activity pupils do in each subject is always sufficiently challenging.

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:

- assess precisely and provide carefully for the needs of pupils entitled to free school meals, so that they make much better progress; and ensure that the use of the pupil premium funding is carefully evaluated by its impact on these pupils' progress
- appoint a leader for each subject and arrange robust training, support and accountabilities for them
- continue to ensure that all pupils are given really challenging work in lessons, which is well matched to their needs, so that each pupil, and all groups, reach their next level of learning quickly.

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**

The local authority provides helpful advice, challenge and support, appropriate to the school's needs. Officers have agreed to provide me with future minutes or records of its meetings with you which check on how well the school is progressing.

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

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**