

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 5225
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Direct email: Samantha.rotherham@tribalgroup.co.uk



26 June 2013

Mrs M Hiscock
Headteacher
Newtown Community Primary School
Newtown
Trowbridge
BA14 0BB

Dear Mrs Hiscock

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Newtown Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings to discuss the action taken since the last inspection were held with you, other senior leaders, seven members of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority. The school improvement action plan, visit notes from local authority officers and minutes of governing body meetings were evaluated. An analysis of the school data indicating the academic achievement of current pupils on roll was undertaken.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one member of staff has returned from maternity leave and one new governor has been appointed.

Main findings

Governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and staff have continued the positive work to improve the school that had started before the previous inspection.

The structured English and mathematics programmes are providing an effective framework from which to develop pupils' basic skills. This is eradicating gaps in pupils' knowledge, caused as a result of previous underachievement, quickly. Clear impact can be seen in pupils' reading attainment in Key Stage 1 which is now in line with the national average. This represents good progress from a starting point significantly below that found nationally. Recent lesson observations carried out by the school indicate: carefully thought out activities and teaching methods are meeting the needs and interests of pupils more precisely; this, in turn is continuing to improve pupils behaviour and their independent learning habits. Theme weeks, for example on Eggs are now providing plentiful opportunities for pupils to apply their newly acquired basic skills across a range of different subjects. Despite pupils' achievement rising across the school, standards for the current Year 6 remain below the national average. This is because pupils have had a long way to catch up in order to meet the national expectations for their age. During the past year, the school has done everything it can to ensure that these pupils have caught up as much lost ground as possible.

Frequent and detailed analyses of pupil progress data by the assistant headteachers is effective in two ways; it is now enabling earlier intervention where pupils are identified at risk of falling behind in their learning and; holding staff to account for the performance of pupils in their class. In the younger age groups, this approach is effectively tackling the significant emotional and social barriers and ensuring that pupils are ready to learn later in their school life. Very careful tracking of pupils' progress combined with well thought out induction and transition procedures, are enabling the school to cope well with the high turnover of pupils. This year, a quarter of all pupils have joined or left the school other than at the normal times. Lesson observations are providing greater clarity and feedback to teachers and leading to consistently good teaching. More frequent checks on marking and assessment procedures are providing pupils with accurate next steps in their learning.

The governing body has not eased up on its determination to become a good school. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are proactive in seeking ways to become even more effective such as conducting visits to outstanding governing bodies. Attendance at termly pupil progress reviews, and leadership team meetings provide governors with first hand evidence about the progress being made in the school. More frequent visits to the school by link governors and reports by subject leaders are adding to their existing knowledge base. It is enabling them to ask increasingly challenging questions. The detailed self-evaluation exercise led to a governor development plan. This has provided the governing body with a clear set of actions and monitoring activities to evaluate the

school's progress towards becoming good. Governors are aware they are creating a sense of momentum and helping to accelerate the improvements being made at the school.

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:

- Attend an Ofsted seminar 'Getting to Good'.
- In the school improvement plan identify more precisely termly achievements secured so far and visually set out the interim steps and targets towards becoming a good school by the next full inspection.

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 school has made effective use of the comprehensive local authority support. Leadership training for the assistant headteachers has provided them with the skills to effectively monitor aspects of the school work in a more strategic way. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. A recent lesson observation review revealed consistently good, and some outstanding teaching. Termly 'Case Conference' pupil progress reviews by the local authority officer are effectively holding the school to account. Support and guidance provided to teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage has resulted in most pupils achieving well. External moderation of work for those children at the end of Reception Year indicates that most have achieved the levels expected for their age from starting points significantly below average.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light

Her Majesty's Inspector