

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 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

9 September 2013

Mrs Pritchard
Headteacher
West Moors Middle School
Heathfield Way
West Moors
Ferndown
Dorset
BH22 0DA

Dear Mrs Pritchard

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to West Moors Middle School

Following my visit to your school on 9 September 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- ensure lesson planning shows the expectations teachers have of individual pupils so their learning can be readily checked up on
- implement plans to assign governors their roles for monitoring the action plan so they can take more responsibility for challenging school leaders effectively
- adjust the measures of success in the action plan so you and governors can check on the drive to improve achievement for all pupils, including those in receipt of pupils premium.

Evidence

The headteacher resigned following the inspection in May. The deputy headteacher has been appointed as acting headteacher.

As well as meeting with you, I also met with the acting headteacher and assistant headteacher, 11 members of the Governing Body and the local authority lead adviser for school improvement to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the post inspection action plan and reviewed performance management arrangements. I toured the school and visited seven lessons.

Main findings

You have made a good start on raising the expectations of teachers to improve their teaching and pupils' learning. Procedures are in place to tackle underperformance through support and additional training. The systems for regularly checking on teaching have the right blend of challenge and support. The opportunity for staff to observe each other and discuss their teaching is building a climate of reflection and gives greater confidence to staff to improve. The school can move to more formal competency procedures when teaching does not improve quickly enough.

You have used the advice of an experienced numeracy consultant to improve teachers' lesson planning. Our observations revealed that some subject teachers are very precise in planning questions to ask pupils and challenge their thinking. Not all teachers are using the planner to focus on individuals in the lesson, including those entitled to the pupil premium.

The systems for regularly checking on pupils' progress have been improved. This is ensuring that end of term reports for governors and parents are based on up to date progress information. Interventions, including those funded by the pupil premium, are being closely monitored.

The school action plan addresses the issues from the last inspection. Its strength lies in the clarity of how actions to improve teaching are to be managed and evaluated within the demanding time scale you have agreed. Whilst there are measures to help you evaluate impact these are too broad and hinders your ability to show how you are reducing underachievement.

Governors have undertaken a review of their roles. They are keen to support the school but are insufficiently tied into the monitoring and evaluation of the action plan to ensure they can challenge leaders with confidence.

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 has provided effective support since the inspection. They have explained to teachers and governors what is expected of them and the rate at which they are expected to improve. The local authority have secured links with local schools to help improve the quality of action planning and teaching of numeracy. Training is being provided by a partner middle school to help selected teachers play a greater role in helping others to quickly become good and outstanding. I shall contact the school later this term to check on the impact of this work.

You are being well supported by experienced colleagues in developing your leadership skills. The school evaluation partner will undertake regular visits as part of his overall evaluating of the school's work.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk

Her Majesty's Inspector