

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

14 October 2013

Mrs Sandra Lawlor
Headteacher
Padnell Junior School
Padnell Road
Waterlooville
PO8 8EA

Dear Mrs Lawlor

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Padnell Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 11 October 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, your staff, pupils and members of the governing body 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- Amend the strategic improvement plan so that it includes specific targets and milestones for evaluating the achievement of different groups of pupils and the quality of teaching in the foundation subjects
- Encourage teachers to tailor their explanations of writing tasks to the needs of pupils of different abilities so that they can begin their work promptly
- Ensure that pupils have sufficient time in lessons to complete extended writing activities to a high standard.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, two members of the governing body and eleven pupils from Year 6. I also accompanied you on a learning walk and visited six lessons briefly. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the school's strategic improvement plan and reviewed other documents including records of lesson observations, information about pupils' progress and minutes from recent meetings with the governing body and the local authority.

Main findings

You, your senior leaders and governors have taken quick and well-devised action to improve the school and raise pupils' achievement. Governors understand their important role in evaluating the impact of the school's actions on outcomes for different groups of pupils. The strategic improvement plan focuses coherently on activities that are most likely to bring about rapid improvement. Overall, there are clear targets for improvement and sensible milestones to support rigorous evaluation. However, targets and milestones for improving the achievement of different groups of pupils and the quality of teaching in the foundation subjects are not specific enough.

You know where teaching is strongest and where it needs further development. Recent monitoring of teaching identifies continued improvements in English and mathematics but variation in the quality of teaching across the foundation subjects. There are sensible plans in place to ensure that all teaching is typically good or better, linked to a programme of training and coaching activities.

You are encouraging teachers to try out new approaches in lessons and to evaluate the impact of these strategies on accelerating pupils' progress. There is a clear focus on helping teachers to improve their use of different types of questions to enhance pupils' understanding. The recently revised staffing structure is ensuring that experienced teachers are developing their leadership skills more fully. Middle leaders now routinely carry out a range of monitoring activities and are beginning to evaluate the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.

Leaders have made substantial changes to the teaching of English and writing in particular. Careful tracking of pupils' progress enables leaders to identify pupils who are falling behind and put in place interventions that help them to keep up with their peers. Importantly, there is now a greater emphasis on applying the skills learnt in English when writing in other subject areas. Consequently, pupils have a clearer understanding of the purpose of writing and how activities link to different topic areas. There is also a strong commitment to helping parents to support their children's writing at home. Taken together, these developments are beginning to

have a positive impact on pupils' progress in English. Nevertheless, some approaches are not as well embedded as others. Leaders are rightly focused, for example, on ensuring that guided writing is better targeted and helps children to improve the quality of their written work.

Pupils told the inspector that the teaching of writing has improved since last year and that the targets they are set to improve their work are clearer and more helpful. They said that writing activities are more fun because they are 'hands on' and teachers use different approaches, such as drama activities and film clips, to help stimulate their ideas. Boys, in particular, said that these approaches were helpful and motivating. Nevertheless, sometimes teachers' explanations are unclear or lengthy and more able pupils have to wait too long before they start their main activity. Consequently, pupils said that they do not always have enough time in lessons to complete their work to a high standard.

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 and local authority work together in close partnership. The local authority leadership and learning partner knows the school's strengths and those areas that need to improve further. She helped leaders to devise the strategic improvement plan. Other support from consultants and advisers is focused and proportionate. Support for the English leader is helping to improve provision across different year groups. Support for individual teachers is improving their skills and knowledge in mathematics.

The school benefits from strong partnerships with other schools. In lesson support from secondary school teachers is enhancing the quality of provision in a number of subject areas. Leaders also draw effectively on support from a wider network of schools and undertake well-focused visits to learn from good practice elsewhere.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector