

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 5307
Direct email: rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com

11 December 2013

Mrs Jane Richardson
Headteacher
Longvernal Primary School
Clapton Road
Midsomer Norton
Radstock
BA3 2LP

Dear Mrs Richardson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Longvernal Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 December 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 October 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:

- focus on specific aspects of teaching, which require improvement by undertaking short, focused observations of lessons. Provide evaluative feedback to staff, which should be swiftly followed by further monitoring sessions to check that improvements have been made. All these observations need to be recorded and updated
- devise ways in which the governors can systematically record and evaluate how they hold the headteacher to account for improving teaching and accelerating pupil progress
- work with the local authority to establish a high quality partner school that can share its expertise and support school improvement.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We carried out a learning walk together around all classes and sampled a number of the pupils' work books. The school action plan was evaluated.

Context

There have been no staff changes since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

Since the inspection, the school has ensured that all teachers have a secure understanding of data and know how to use it to track pupil progress and plan lessons that meet individual needs. Detailed records of pupil progress meetings indicate that some successful strategies have been introduced to accelerate progress. These include the positive impact of the reading and writing programme and the improved attitudes of the pupils towards these activities. Challenges faced by teachers include pupils' poor vocabulary and a lack of parental engagement with helping children to read at home. Nevertheless, attendance at parents' meetings has improved and the school has been successful in engaging families in a cooking programme, which supports key vocabulary and knowledge about nutrition and science. Pupils have an improved understanding of their targets, which are stated clearly in their work books. Following staff discussion, the marking policy has been rewritten. However, teachers are not applying the policy consistently, which means that pupils across the school are not always receiving high quality feedback. The observations of teaching and learning carried out by the headteacher are too wide in their focus, resulting in an overview of practice, which does not always accurately inform what actually needs to improve.

Having reflected on the inspection findings, the governing body is eager to ensure that its strategic involvement in the life of the school can be measured against pupil outcomes. They have made observations of the learning environment and scrutinised the pupils' workbooks. However, their findings are not systematically recorded or evaluated in relation to holding the headteacher to account for improving teaching and accelerating pupil achievement.

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

In addition to the support provided by the school achievement partner, the local authority has deployed two consultants to work alongside senior and middle leaders. An agreement is yet to be reached on securing the commitment of a partner school which can provide the coaching and training necessary to support the improvements required.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bath and North East Somerset.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector