

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 F 0117 315 0430
Email: Rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com

24 January 2014

Nick Hodgess
Interim Headteacher
Alexandra Junior School
Denbigh Road
Hounslow
Middlesex
TW3 4DU

Dear Mr Hodgess

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Alexandra Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 22 January 2014, 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 November 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:

- include more precision as to how members of the governing body will evaluate the actions to which they are linked in the post-Ofsted plan
- improve governors' engagement with parents and carers
- evaluate the progress made by pupils by giving greater emphasis to comparisons against national expectations.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, one other governor and a group of teachers to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I spoke with the school's headteacher advisor and made brief visits to lessons with you and the deputy headteacher to speak with pupils and scrutinise their work. I evaluated the post-Ofsted action plan and reviewed other relevant documents.

Context

Since the last inspection, you have appointed a teaching assistant to support pupils in lessons. A supply teacher is now teaching pupils in small groups or alone, especially those eligible for pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. An overseas qualified teacher is covering lessons for teachers who have planning, preparation and assessment time. A parent governor has been appointed.

Currently, governors are in formal consultation with the local authority to amalgamate the school with the Alexandra Infant and Nursery School. The formal consultation ends in February 2014 and if approved the existing schools will close on 31 August 2014 and a new primary school will be established on 1 September 2014.

Main findings

You, your senior leaders and governors have introduced key changes to tackle the areas for improvement outlined in the last inspection. This is reflected in the school's action plan which has realistic deadlines and measureable success criteria to assess its impact on the progress made by different groups of pupils. The plan outlines the part governors will take in evaluating a range of these actions. However, it is not clear when this will happen or which governors this will involve.

Teachers' marking is now providing guidance for pupils about the steps required to improve their learning. Teachers share success criteria with pupils in lessons, so they can assess their learning. Coaching by the deputy headteacher and phase leaders is improving teachers' planning and their skills in checking pupils' understanding during lessons. The most able pupils are deepening their knowledge of mathematics by using their own skills to solving complex problems, but they are not always challenged enough.

Target setting has improved. Staff track the progress of individuals and pupil groups through half-termly pupil progress meetings. Information about pupils is now analysed by assessing the progress made by individuals and different groups, including those eligible for pupil premium funding. However, not enough emphasis is

being placed on comparing pupils' progress against how well pupils are doing nationally with similar starting points. Not enough emphasis is being placed on comparing the progress made by pupils eligible for pupil premium funding with other pupils in the school.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do have been raised. Through their contribution to pupil progress meetings, teachers are more involved in identifying the support required to tackle gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers are using a newly introduced lesson planning sheet which helps them to plan lessons which build on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils' engagement in lessons has improved because you say teachers are expected to use activities which stimulating learning.

Pupils' engagement in writing is being developed through teaching extended writing across a range of subjects such as geography, history and art. Pupils' reading skills are being developed by reading topic-related books in peer groups guided by an adult.

The leadership skills of the two phase leaders, and the mathematics and literacy leaders are developing well. For example, they deliver staff training sessions on improving teaching. They have weekly leadership coaching sessions with the deputy headteacher, and they work alongside staff to improve their classroom practice. You have increased the frequency with which leaders monitor teaching quality by introducing a monthly assessment cycle to check teachers' work, the quality of their classroom practice and its impact on pupils' progress.

A governor has attended data training with the intention of sharing this with other governors to sharpen their ability in holding leaders to account. Governors have reviewed the post-Ofsted action plan and a governor has met with the inclusion leader to review the school's support for pupils receiving additional support. However, governors have not been proactive enough in improving their communication and contact with parents and carers, and have not included this in their planning.

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

You are supported effectively by the local authority through the work of the headteacher advisor. The four support visits since the last inspection have focussed on writing the post-Ofsted action plan and completing a review to assess the effectiveness of key aspects of the school's work. The next step will be to evaluate

the impact of the action plan on pupils' achievement. This will also be done during the local authority's Raising Achievement Plan termly meetings.

You have established links with a number of successful local schools and external consultants in order to rapidly improve teaching within the shortest possible time. This support is being coordinated by the deputy headteacher to ensure it is put to best use. An outstanding teacher from a school in the collaborative group, C8, is working with targeted staff and this is improving their teaching. A consultant headteacher is scheduled to work alongside leaders to continue to improve their use of data.

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

Yours sincerely

Pamela Fearnley
Her Majesty's Inspector