

Tribal
Kings Orchard, One Queen
Street, Bristol
BS2 0HQ

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



24 June 2015

Ms Andrea de Bunsen
The Headteacher
Kennel Lane School
Kennel Lane
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG42 2EX

Dear Ms de Bunsen

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kennel Lane School

Following my visit with to your school on 15 and 16 June 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher in each of the primary and secondary departments before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bracknell Forest.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching so that none is inadequate and more is good by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can do
 - focus their teaching more on telling pupils what they are expected to learn, rather than simply on what tasks they will complete, so pupils are able to assess how well they have done
 - match activities to the different needs of pupils
 - make sure time is not wasted in lessons on poor quality activities
 - let pupils know how well they have done and, where appropriate, how they can improve their work.
- Raise achievement in English and mathematics, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in sixth form, by:
 - ensuring that there is a consistent, whole-school approach to teaching reading and writing skills
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in a range of different subjects.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that teachers give pupils more opportunities to think about their learning and work more independently.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - analysing information about pupils' achievement over time, compared to national data, so that the school is secure in judging whether pupils are making expected progress
 - ensuring the impact of additional funding is carefully evaluated so that the school, including governors, know whether this money is being used effectively to support eligible pupils
 - using data about pupils' achievement to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development
 - planning detailed actions for improvement, based on an accurate self-assessment of the schools' provision and outcomes
 - making sure that the phonics (matching letters to the sounds they make) approach to teaching reading to younger pupils is embedded across the school
 - ensuring that governors have the information they need in order to understand their role in holding the school fully to account.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 15 and 16 June 2015

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. A meeting was also held with a group of older pupils leaving school at the end of the academic year. The inspector made a series of visits, over both days, to lessons in the primary, secondary and sixth form departments. She was accompanied by senior leaders on these visits. This monitoring inspection focused on the opportunities provided to pupils to think about their learning and work more independently and the effectiveness of leadership and management in planning for improvement. Other areas for improvement identified at the inspection of November 2013 were not reviewed as, at previous monitoring inspections, the inspector judged these aspects to no longer be a cause for concern.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, one senior member of staff has resigned and will be leaving at the end of the academic year. One member of the leadership team is due to start maternity leave imminently and another will be returning from maternity leave in September. A review of the school's leadership structure has been completed and changes to roles and responsibilities implemented. The school's sixth form is due to expand significantly in September 2015.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Observations of pupils in lessons, samples of work and school data indicate that most are currently making good progress in the range of curriculum subjects. Assessments of pupils' learning are skilfully carried out by teachers and teaching assistants on a daily basis. This information is used to adjust learning activities so that time is not wasted on tasks that are too easy or too hard. Every single pupil's learning is closely tracked and individual learning plans are compiled and closely followed.

Formal assessments are carried out at regular points. The data generated are now examined in detail and compared, whenever possible, with figures available nationally. Leaders, teachers and governors all have a clearer picture of the groups of pupils and individuals who are progressing most and least rapidly, in which classes or subject areas, as well as their overall attainment. Pupils who have made less than expected progress receive targeted additional help. Data analysis is sophisticated and has enabled the mathematics subject leader, for example, to identify that pupils make better progress in number than in shape and space. Consequently, senior and subject leaders are able to adapt action plans and prioritise specific staff training in order that pupils make better gains across the breadth of the mathematics curriculum. Approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics have become well established. The upward trend in

achievement, including in English and mathematics, has been further built on since the last monitoring visit. However, data indicate that relatively weaker achievement in science continues.

More use has recently been made of links with other schools. Teachers and leaders have been able to compare pupils' work and discuss and agree the levels of attainment represented. This has helped to ensure that assessments of pupils' learning are accurate and targets ambitious.

The quality of teaching

Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well. Detailed observations and judicious use of questioning ensure adults are clear about what pupils know, understand and can do. Learning plans are detailed and different for each pupil, reflecting their individual circumstances. Such plans are adjusted on a daily basis.

Teachers and supporting adults continuously engage pupils in conversations about learning and are mindful of the priority to promote pupils' independence skills at every opportunity. For example, in the Reception class, children were asked to make a choice from just two cards or from a complete set, according to their needs, when selecting which nursery rhyme to sing. In the sixth form, music and visual images were used to stimulate pupils' ability to describe the movement of the sea before translating these descriptions into dance moves.

Teachers successfully exploit all opportunities to promote basic literacy and mathematics skills in all subjects. Communication through speech, signing, communication boards and cards is fundamental to all lessons. Opportunities to read, write, count and calculate are routinely identified on lesson plans. All teachers know the key methods to use and a consistent approach is evident.

The quality of teaching and learning is closely monitored by senior staff. Teachers are clear that they are accountable for the pupils' progress in their class or subject and are able to evidence this through data, annotated records of pupils' work, photographs and observational notes. The majority of teaching contributes strongly to pupils' increased pace of learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

As reported in previous monitoring inspections, pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is generally good. A positive, cheerful atmosphere abounds. Pupils and adults treat one another with courtesy and respect. The school's systems for managing behaviour, including highly disruptive outbursts, are thoroughly established. Everyone knows what to do and what to expect. Despite this, school leaders continually seek ways to support individual pupils better. A dog is currently being trained as a Pets as Therapy (PAT) dog. Although not yet fully trained, his visits to school are eagerly received by pupils. Opportunities to talk to and stroke the dog are already impacting positively on some pupils' behaviour.

Pupils' independence skills are being effectively promoted. Pupils of all ages were observed to be making choices for themselves and discussing their learning, rather than simply following instructions. For example, during horticulture, older pupils chose which plants they wanted to plant, discussed how to arrange them in the pots and where in the school grounds to place them. They then carried out the planting with little further direction. In the primary department, pupils made choices about how to fix different materials together when making costumes related to their history topic.

Pupils of all ages and abilities think about and discuss their own learning. Increasingly, pupils are able to report on what they are learning, rather than simply describing what they are doing. In a computing lesson, pupils successfully completed self-assessment tasks that encompassed reviewing their knowledge of technical terms as well as their ability to use a search engine with what degree of support. Pupils talk, or communicate, with increasing confidence and familiarity to a peer or an adult about their learning. Furthermore, expectations that pupils will work hard are made clear. Pupils of all ages were observed to concentrate on tasks for significant periods without adult intervention or direction. For example in Key Stage 1, pupils listened and watched the class teacher, without interrupting or moving from their chairs for a sustained period. In Key Stage 3 swimming, pupils listened to instructions and individually worked to improve their style.

During this monitoring inspection, pupils were taking part in a range of activities associated with e-safety week. In one activity, Key Stage 3 pupils were asked to make a series of decisions about safe conduct when using social media. This reflects the school's commitment to promoting independence, as well as their commitment to safety.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leaders and governors have reviewed the structure of the school's leadership team. A new arrangement has been adopted. This includes whole school subject responsibilities, key stage and department leads. Middle leadership roles and responsibilities are now clearly defined. All leaders, including those newly in positions of responsibility, are energised by the changes. They have high expectations of themselves, other staff and pupils. Despite recent changes, leadership overall has strengthened and a sense of optimism and ambition is apparent.

The governing body continues to play a key role in increasing the leadership capacity of the school. Systems and processes for holding leaders to account and for interrogating data and the range of school information are thorough. Whilst governors are confident in the leadership of the school, they are not complacent and demonstrate rigour in their oversight. Governors are clear about what needs to improve further.

Although improvement plans have been refined over time, current improvement plans and self-evaluation documents are typically lengthy and, in places, insufficiently precise. School improvement plans and self-assessments lack sharp evaluation. Consequently, these documents are not fully effective as tools by which leaders and governors can monitor progress, identify impact and appropriately hold staff to account.

External support

The school welcomes the continued support and advice provided by the local authority via the attached adviser. Regular visits over a protracted period of time have resulted in a high level of trust. School staff are proactive in seeking advice from the local authority when they have a query or concern. This reflects the increased confidence of leaders at all levels.