

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr D G Williams
Bridgtown Primary School
North Street
Bridgtown
Cannock, Staffordshire
WA11 OAZ

Dear Mr Williams

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 October 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 2 and 3 May 2006, the school was asked to make more consistent use of short term assessment and individual target setting so that tasks are always matched closely to pupils' needs and pupils know what they need to do to improve; improve the use of long term tracking data and other monitoring outcomes to raise standards for all pupils, especially in English in Key Stage 2; and, work closely with parents to improve rates of attendance.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement, although these actions have yet to have significant impact on raising pupils' achievement.

The school has introduced a number of initiatives including a common assessment system for the core areas of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. However, some of these have not been fully implemented, and there has been no internal moderation to date to ensure that there is a reasonable level of consistency across the school. Moreover, this work has not extended to other subjects across the curriculum and expectations often remain less ambitious in these subjects. The increasing availability of assessment data has helped some staff to set targets for individual pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, but this is not consistent across the school particularly at Key Stage 2 where tasks do not always match the individual needs of pupils. Teachers' confidence in using the assessment information still varies. This was evident in the teaching observed during

the visit, which was judged to be satisfactory overall. Pupils were generally enthusiastic in lessons and relationships were mostly good. In the better lessons, teachers used interactive whiteboards, displays and learning objectives well to develop pupils' understanding of what they had to do. Pupils worked best where they were given a lot of information and support. However, marking in books and discussions with pupils did not always make clear what they needed to do to improve.

The senior team has not yet begun to make the best use of the tracking information to monitor pupils' progress against their individual targets. The challenge for the school is to increase the frequency and rigour of this monitoring and to evaluate its impact on raising standards and achievement. Dips in achievement are identified but the reasons are not always analysed sufficiently to promote further improvement. Perceptions of what constitutes good progress are not consistent across the school.

Governors are given assessment data but are not yet fully involved in the monitoring cycle. This has meant that they do not fully understand the areas of weakness nor areas requiring further development.

The school has identified areas for improvement, but is at the very early stage of developing its self-evaluation and improvement plan. The school recognises that it needs to act on this as a matter of urgency and recognises that it needs to monitor and evaluate the strategies that have been implemented over the last 12 months.

The school acknowledges the importance of improving attendance. New systems are in place. Parents are contacted on the first day of absence, although some do not always respond to these calls. There is close and regular liaison with the education welfare officer who undertakes home visits when appropriate. Patterns of absence are analysed and legitimate reasons for absence made clear. The attendance policy is being reviewed and the implementation of fixed penalty notice approved by governors. As a result, there has been some improvement in attendance but the school has not yet met its target. Holidays taken in term time remain a challenge for the school.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Rashida Sharif
Her Majesty's Inspector