

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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



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Mrs Niki Alvarado
Larchfield Primary and Nursery School
Bargeman Road
Maidenhead
SL6 2SG.

Dear Mrs Alvarado

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 November 2009 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please thank the pupils and staff who gave their time to the discussions.

Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed, the curriculum has been reviewed and focus groups have been introduced to allow all staff to influence the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- increase the proportion of good or better teaching to accelerate pupils progress and further raise standards
- ensure that teachers capitalise on opportunities during lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative in order to accelerate the rate of progress
- increase the influence of subject coordinators on the quality of teaching and learning.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has been very successful in raising standards. At the time of the last inspection, standards were well below average in English, mathematics and science. In the standardised tests for Year 6 in 2009, pupils achieved results that were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. There has been a significant improvement in the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in

English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics. Results in reading have improved considerably but standards in writing remain low. Senior and middle leaders have rightly prioritised this as an area for further improvement. The school aims to achieve a greater consistency in the rate of progress made by pupils. The vast majority of pupils make the expected progress but a legacy of staff turbulence and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have created gaps in the knowledge and understanding of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. The school has worked in close partnership with local authority consultants and there is now a sharper focus on using assessment to improve the quality of pupils' learning in English and mathematics. Rigorous systems to monitor and track pupils' progress identify underachievement and the information is used very effectively to plan extensive intervention for targeted pupils.

Although the school has been very successful in raising standards, progress in making improvements is not outstanding because teaching and learning is not consistently good across the school. The headteacher has a very accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the staff and places a high priority on professional development and accountability. A thorough programme of lessons observations, work scrutiny and review by middle leaders is used to improve the quality of teaching. Where lessons fall below an acceptable level, a support plan is put in place to ensure that teachers understand what they need to do to improve. Coaching and mentoring are being used well to disseminate the features of outstanding practice. The best teaching involves pupils in their own learning and is supported by constructive feedback through the use of meaningful dialogue in class or detailed marking of work. Pupils make good progress in lessons where teacher expectations are high and teaching assistants are deployed to move pupils' learning on as well as providing the teacher with support. The school recognises that there is more work to be done to make sure that pupils in all years are provided with teaching that consistently challenges all learners, especially the higher attainers, and that pupils clearly understand what they need to do to improve to reach their targets.

The school is in a good position to sustain the improvements made since the previous inspection because leadership and management have been strengthened at all levels. The dedicated headteacher has an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. The appointment of a deputy headteacher in April 2009 as a strong role model and the introduction of focus groups have strengthened the capacity of middle leaders to contribute to curriculum development and influence the quality of learning across the school. The enthusiastic and committed middle managers express confidence in the improvements and demonstrate their capacity to make them work.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector