

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
BRISTOL  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0845 123 6001  
Direct F 0117 315 0430  
Direct email: sheila.browning@  
tribalgroup.co.uk



13 May 2010

Mrs J McDonald  
The Headteacher  
Bessemer Grange Primary School  
Dylways  
London  
SE5 8HP

Dear Mrs McDonald

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 May 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would be grateful if you would pass on my thanks to the teachers, the non-teaching staff and the pupils who also contributed to the visit.

Since the last inspection the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher posts were made substantive in June 2008 and January 2009, respectively. The headteacher is retiring in July and an experienced headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2010. One teacher left and a newly qualified teacher was appointed. Following a review the leadership team was restructured. The building of a Children's Centre and an Early Years Foundation Stage unit is nearing completion.

As result of the inspection on 13 and 14 May 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science
- ensure that assessment information is used fully when planning what pupils need to learn next, so that all are able to make the best progress possible
- develop the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders.

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

The shortcomings identified in the last inspection are being addressed and the effect of the changes introduced is evident in the improved progress and rising attainment of pupils. In 2009, for Year 6, pupils' attainment rose significantly when compared to 2008 overall in mathematics and science. Results in English rose but not as significantly. As in 2008 a lower-than-average proportion of pupils gained the higher



level. Pupils' attainment is closer to that nationally. Given pupils' below average attainment on entry, this represents much improved progress. Pupils' current work shows that the school is sustaining this trend. Good progress has been made in setting more challenging targets and the school's checks on pupils' progress indicate the majority are on track to exceed them.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked hard in close partnership with the local authority to put in sustainable systems to check and evaluate the school's performance. The new rigorous tracking systems ensure that those pupils who require additional support are quickly identified and appropriate interventions take place. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and teaching assistants effectively support them. The school can pinpoint pupils whose progress has accelerated rapidly but for a few progress has remained static. Pupil progress meetings ensure staff are more accountable for their pupils' progress and this has raised teachers' expectations further. Pupils too are consulted about how they learn best. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the quality and quantity of pupils' work and their progress continues to be variable between classes and year groups. The system known as 'assessing pupils' progress' is used well to check pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills. Consequently, teachers are more skilled in applying teacher assessments, while their use of what is commonly called 'assessment for learning' is still developing.

Lesson observations confirm that leaders accurately judge the quality of teaching and learning as satisfactory and improving. In lessons, teachers shared with pupils what they would be learning and why so that they understood. Use of 'talking partners' helped pupils to share their ideas before writing, check their own learning and that of others. Teachers are trialling different ways of target setting to see what works best, but as yet there is no common practice and this restricts progress. Teachers interpret progress data but are not always using it to plan work that effectively challenges pupils. The marking of pupils' work is improving, but it is still too variable in its quality. The best is thorough and clearly shows next steps. Nonetheless, some untidy, inaccurate and unfinished work is accepted with limited guidance as to how to improve.

Teachers are involved in a wide range of training and mentoring programmes to improve their teaching, leadership and management skills through City Challenge, independent programmes and the good support provided by local authority consultants and the school. One middle manager said, 'Our roles have developed massively, we talk to each other about common issues far more effectively as a team.' This represents the views of colleagues. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has a clear vision. Her determination for further improvement is shared by staff and governors and she has gained their support and commitment. Consequently, the school is in a much stronger position than it was at the previous inspection. Improvements are seen in sustaining pupils' performance, the quality of teaching and learning, and teachers' use of assessment data. Self-evaluation is increasingly accurate and the established leadership team is



tackling weaknesses and securing improvements. Priorities for further development in the raising attainment plan and other school documents are well-focused. The learning environment has been enhanced and the Year 6 classrooms are exemplary models of what stimulating classrooms should be like.

Those with leadership and management responsibilities are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Through their sampling of teaching, lesson plans, pupils' work, staff training, and their subject development planning, they can demonstrate leadership skills and their impact on raising pupil attainment and improving the quality of provision. Together these features indicate the school's better capacity to improve since the inspection.

The local authority and other partners working with the school have provided good support. This, combined with the strong steer and high expectations of the headteacher, has helped ensure improvements. Whilst leaders are pleased with the progress made so far they are not complacent and are determined to reduce the remaining inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment.

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

Sheila Browning  
Additional Inspector