

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 5359
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

20 November 2013

David Block
Headteacher
Heber Primary School
Heber Road
Lordship Lane
London
SE22 9LA

Dear Mr Block

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Heber Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 November 2013, 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 September 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:

- ensure that identified leaders and governors fully evaluate the impact of actions to raise achievement at each key checkpoint.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I scrutinised a range of school documentation, including: the school's action plan, information about pupils'

achievement and records relating to the monitoring of teaching. I visited a range of classes with you and your deputy to see teaching and look at pupils' work.

Context

Since the last inspection three vacancies on the governing body have been filled.

Main findings

Since the last inspection the headteacher, ably supported by his deputy have acted decisively to raise expectations and quicken the pace of improvement. Teachers are clear about what is expected and are committed to ensuring that all groups of pupils make better progress from their individual starting points. The school's action plan focuses sharply on key areas for improvement. Milestones which demonstrate a sufficient sense of urgency are in place. However, there is a lack of clarity about who will evaluate the impact of each action and how this will be done.

Leaders have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching. They have observed all staff in the relatively short time since the last inspection. They have given each teacher helpful feedback about their strengths and areas for development. Action plans are put swiftly in place where elements of teaching are weak. Importantly, leaders make regular checks to ensure that the necessary improvements have taken place.

In their drive to develop teachers' skills, leaders have provided training and feedback specifically on the quality of assessment and feedback to pupils. The impact of this is clearly evidenced in lesson observation records and pupils' books. For example, teachers are checking more regularly on pupils' different rates of learning and adjusting activities to suit their individual needs. They are making use of more probing questioning to develop pupils' thinking and to provide greater stretch and challenge. As a result, pupils are making better progress, including the most able and pupils with special educational needs.

Teachers mark books frequently and provide helpful feedback to pupils. They follow the school's new marking policy and the use of the 'tickled pink' and 'green for growth' colour coding is developing pupils' skills and accuracy. Leaders are aware that expectations of how pupils should respond are not yet consistent across all subjects and year groups. They are conducting regular book checks and lesson drop-ins to tackle this.

School leaders have sharpened the focus on the teaching of writing. This includes a whole-school focus on improving pupils' use of grammar and punctuation. They have adjusted the curriculum so that an extra writing lesson is provided for Year 4 pupils. This is helping pupils to develop their skills and knowledge more securely. In order

to improve progress in mathematics, the school has organised pupils into ability sets in Year 4, as well as in Years 5 and 6, so that teaching and support can be targeted precisely. The school's mathematics coordinator has provided additional training and support for teachers to develop their skills. This approach, together with opportunities to share good practice and plan with others, is improving mathematics teaching.

Senior leaders have recognised the need to develop the skills of other leaders and managers. They have introduced more regular assessment checkpoints to track the progress of pupils. They use this information to analyse the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. Middle leaders are fully involved in supporting and monitoring the quality of teaching. They provide effective training and support to help teachers improve their skills through team teaching and joint planning. They meet regularly to evaluate the impact of their work.

Governors are offering increasing levels of challenge and strengthening their capacity to provide challenge and support. They have booked an external review of governance and a review of teaching and learning for January 2014. The Chair of the Governing Body is resolutely focused on driving a more rapid pace of change. Governors are quickly extending their knowledge and understanding of the variety of ways in which school performance can be assessed.

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

The local authority has increased its level of support since the last inspection and further consultancy visits are planned. Representatives have visited the school to sharpen the school's understanding of the improvement process. Effective support has been provided by a local authority Early Years consultant. This has enabled the school to clarify and develop its assessment procedures, so that progress can be more precisely tracked across the Early Years Foundation Stage and into Year 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Russell Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector