

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 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroun.com



25 June 2013

Mrs C Robinson
Headteacher
Coxheath Primary School
Stockett Lane
Maidstone
ME17 4PS

Dear Mrs Robinson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Coxheath Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and other senior staff, members of the governing body, pupils and a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised school plans, data about how much progress pupils are making and other documents. I toured the school at work.

Main findings

With useful support from the local authority, you wrote, and are working on, a suitable action plan to start dealing with the recommendations from the inspection. Some quick improvement has resulted. You have evidence that additional teaching provided to pupils who need extra support has helped quicken their progress. Pupils' writing has improved as a result of some better teaching. This improvement is well led by the subject leaders for English. Pupils like the way that work is marked, and say it helps them to improve their work, though you know that the quality of marking is not consistently strong through the school. It is good to note that school

assessments indicate that pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has risen at both Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2013. Some key leaders, including the special educational needs co-ordinator, are helpfully and proficiently taking on increased responsibility and accountability. Rightly, you have realised that you were taking too much on yourself.

However, the school's longer-term evaluation and improvement activity remains too disjointed and, to use your word, nebulous. In particular, the school lacks a fully-fledged school improvement plan, with clear targets, objectives, actions, timescales and monitoring and evaluation systems. This is needed to sharpen, guide more closely and quicken improvements. The post-inspection action plan mentioned above is only for the short-term. Although there is evidence of some recent improvement in teaching, the lesson observations you and the deputy headteacher make across the school do not pinpoint precisely what each teacher needs to do to improve their work further. Nor do you follow up quickly or practically enough with each teacher to ensure that they make the recommended improvements.

You keep useful records of the progress pupils make. Their progress is improving, though not consistently for all groups. Pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding make inconsistent progress and the gap between their attainment and that of the other pupils is too wide. You need to address this as a priority.

The pupils I met spoke positively of the school. They feel safe and enjoy school life. They consider that behaviour is generally good. They also note that, although different groups of pupils do different work in lessons, this is often 'too easy'. This is indicative of the key need to improve the way that work is planned for pupils with different abilities and needs.

The governing body is well organised and its members show a shrewd awareness of the issues the school faces. They recognise the immediate improvements since the inspection, but rightly expect the school's longer-term work in improving itself to be sharper and quicker.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action, so far, to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- write and implement a well-structured longer-term school strategic plan, in place for September 2013; this must contain clear, unequivocal, well-focused targets, agreed with the local authority; well-defined actions; suitably rapid timescales; and accountability through robust monitoring and evaluation procedures
- continue to delegate more leadership responsibility to middle leaders
- ensure that the programme of regular lesson observations identifies and records very precisely what improvements each teacher should make and that you check that these improvements have been made quickly

- launch a whole-school initiative to provide work in lessons which is well-suited to, and challenging for, pupils of all abilities and needs; this initiative should be clearly designed in the new strategic plan, it should be practical in nature and directly led and overseen by you and the deputy headteacher.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has an astute understanding of the school's circumstances. It has provided much support and guidance to the school over the last few years. It now rightly recognises that the need is for less support but more challenge to senior leaders. You need to be held to regular account for continuing the work you have started since the inspection and the impact this makes on pupils' learning. For this reason, the local authority representative has prudently agreed to visit the school fortnightly for the foreseeable future and discuss the progress the school is making regularly with me.

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

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector