

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 6188524

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566863

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: jrbennett@cfbt.com



6 July 2015

Mr Andrew Knighton
Headteacher
Shield Row Primary School
King Edward VIII Terrace
Shield Row
Stanley
County Durham
DH9 0HQ

Dear Mr Knighton

Special measures monitoring inspection of Shield Row Primary School

Following my visit with to your school on the 2 and 3 July 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's and Adult Services for Durham.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables all pupils, in all subjects, especially those in Years 1 to 4, to be challenged in their learning and reach their full potential, by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching and raising all teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - developing teachers' skills and confidence in assessing the standard of pupils' work
 - planning activities that take full account of what pupils already know so that activities fully challenge all abilities, sustain pupils' concentration and give rise to fewer opportunities for them to drift off-task
 - ensuring teachers respond appropriately to pupils' responses to their questions so that they can quickly address any misunderstandings in their learning
 - utilising teaching assistants more effectively during whole-class and small-group intervention sessions
 - ensuring the activities children choose for themselves in the early years are sufficiently challenging, especially for boys and those that are most able, so that children make a more rapid start to their learning.

- Address the weaknesses in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills, particularly in the early years and Years 1 to 4, so that pupils across the school make at least good progress, by:
 - improving the school's approach to the teaching of phonics so that work is matched closely to pupil's abilities and new sounds are learned quickly, including through opportunities to practise writing and spelling
 - providing training for staff so they know how pupils' English and mathematics skills should develop as they move through the school
 - planning more regular opportunities for pupils to develop their English and mathematics skills in other subjects of the curriculum
 - improving the quality of activities provided in the early years, both indoors and outdoors, so that children have more opportunities to practise their early reading, mark making and number skills.

- Urgently improve leadership and management, including governance, by developing the skills and knowledge of leaders at all levels, by:
 - setting more ambitious targets for what pupils are to achieve at each stage of their education
 - establishing an effective system for tracking, analysing and evaluating the achievement of pupils
 - ensuring improvement plans are based upon an accurate evaluation of the whole school's performance, prioritise the most significant areas of weakness and provide measurable targets and timescales to aid rigorous evaluation

- monitoring the performance of teachers in accordance with the National Teachers' Standards so that they understand their strengths and weaknesses, are held to account for closing gaps in pupils' achievement and an effective programme of training can be undertaken to raise the quality of teaching
- developing the role of subject leaders so that they take greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and achievement within their areas of responsibility
- ensuring governors provide robust challenge to leaders and carry out their own checks to verify the headteacher's view.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 July 2015

Evidence

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, five representatives of the governing body, a representative from the local authority's education development service and the chief executive of Tudhoe Learning Trust. I talked formally to one group of pupils and to many informally, in lessons, the dining hall, around school and on the yard and fields. I also spoke to seven parents at the start of the school day and reported their views to the headteacher when they were happy for me to do so.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection in March 2015, one teacher and a teaching assistant have been on long-term sickness leave, one teacher has resigned and two new governors have joined the governing body. The school is due to become an academy within the Tudhoe Learning Trust by the start of the new school year in September.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' progress has continued to hasten across classes, from often very low starting points last September. Changes in the way that staff plan for and work with children in Nursery and Reception classes, along with higher expectations of what children are capable of have paid dividends. End of year assessments in the early years are significantly higher than last year in all areas of learning. Senior leaders' actions to improve the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent), have made a significant difference to children's reading and writing development in these classes. Reception children's phonics, literacy and numeracy books show they are now catching up to where they should be before they enter Year 1. Improvements in phonics teaching have also resulted in a rise in the proportion of pupils making expected gains in their phonic assessments in Year 1 to above last year's national average.

Pupils' progress is hastening well in Year 6. Books, observations and teachers' assessments suggest that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils has narrowed completely. Overall, pupils' achievements are at least in line with that found nationally. Despite the improvements seen in pupils' progress in lessons and in pupils' books, work has not had time to tackle fully the history of significant previous underachievement in some classes. Achievements in Years 1 and 2 remain below average. Work, however, has been effective in reducing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. Pupils' progress in Year 3, although accelerating, particularly in mathematics, has been hampered by turbulence in

staffing. This has had a particular impact on the rates of progress disadvantaged pupils are making and gaps between this group and other pupils remain wide.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching continues to improve as teachers embed the training and development opportunities they have all undertaken. There is more consistency across classes, particularly in the effectiveness of teaching of phonics and reading. Writing is still an area of focus. Inconsistencies in rates of progress remain because teachers do not always plan activities that move pupils on quickly from their current levels of ability to the next level. This means that occasionally the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and lower-ability pupils tackle work that is too hard for them. Leaders are taking action to tackle this. Senior leaders check the effectiveness of teachers' use of the marking and feedback policy regularly. As a result, teachers are applying the policy more consistently. Pupils report they enjoy the opportunities they now have to judge their own successes towards the learning objectives of the lesson and then have teachers check the accuracy of their own judgements. Leaders have identified that not all pupils are given opportunities to act on the advice provided by their teachers. Sometimes there is no advice on what to improve, or what the pupils' next steps need to be to reach the higher level. Work is ongoing to improve matters.

Actions to improve the effectiveness of teaching assistants have made a positive difference to their deployment and their impact in lessons. In all lessons observed, teaching assistants were supporting groups of pupils or individual pupils well. For example, in Year 3, the teaching assistant worked successfully with a group of pupils who had been struggling with work that had been too hard for them the previous day. She provided brisk, intensive 'back to basics' number work to reinforce, or remind them of skills misunderstood or forgotten.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite and friendly and speak respectfully and enthusiastically to visitors about the school and their work. Behaviour continues to be good in the dining hall and at break and lunchtimes. The well-resourced and well-supervised outdoor areas give pupils time to play and socialise with their friends successfully. Pupils' attitudes to learning in class are improving and, in most lessons, pupils listen intently to their teachers, are keen to get on and share their ideas on their tables. Occasionally, work is not set at the right level in class for a small number of pupils and then their attention wanes. However, they do not disrupt the learning of others and their teachers bring them to task quickly.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leadership and governance continue to improve. The headteacher has become more robust and strategic in his monitoring and evaluation work across school. He continues to increase the involvement of the deputy headteacher and middle leaders in this work and in sharing responsibility in driving forward required improvements. The deputy headteacher and middle leader are relishing their increasing responsibilities and the sharper way they are held to account for the performance of their areas of specialism. They report the system for monitoring teaching and reviewing the performance of teachers is now well embedded and robust. Weaker performance is challenged effectively. This has led to the improvements in the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress in lessons.

The governing body is accomplished in reviewing and evaluating a wide range of data and information about the effectiveness of the school's work. Their programme of visits ensures they have a good understanding of what is happening across the school. They are using this collective information to challenge leaders about the impact of their work on improvements in teaching and pupils' achievements, progress and attendance. Governors are driving forward the actions identified in their own plan, following the review of their effectiveness in the spring term. Their contributions to the local authority's monthly steering group, that checks the school's progress towards removal of special measures, is recognised by local authority staff as being increasingly tenacious and well informed.

External support

School leaders have continued to receive regular challenge and support from the local authority's education development partner and advisers. More recently, the education development partner has been working with the headteacher to check the school's accuracy in the assessments of pupils' work and in the quality and impact of teaching. Leaders continue to value this challenge. It has rightly been reducing as leaders build their own skills to move the school forward themselves. The school has also received a range of valued training and support from the Tudhoe Learning Trust. Liaison between the education development partner and the chief executive of the trust is ensuring a smooth transition to academy status.