

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566932

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: hcarnall@cfbt.com



26 June 2014

Mr Andy Jessop
Principal
Thrybergh Primary School
Oldgate Lane
Thrybergh
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S65 4JG

Dear Mr Jessop

Special measures monitoring inspection of Thrybergh Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 and 25 June 2014, 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 June 2013. 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 newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection provided that a clear package of support is put in place, using the skills of experienced staff from Rawmarsh Ashwood Primary Academy.

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 Strategic Director, Children & Young People's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 classes so that pupils' attainment rises quickly and they make at least good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - all teachers set tasks that are appropriately challenging and matched closely to pupils' needs and abilities, particularly for boys
 - pupils do not spend too long listening to teachers, so that they have greater opportunities to work on their own or in groups and maintain their concentration
 - pupils understand their targets, know how they are doing in meeting them, and know how to improve their work to a higher level
 - teachers' marking of pupils' work gives pupils detailed information about what needs improving and teachers give them time to practise it again, so that they can learn from their mistakes
 - teachers insist that in all subjects, pupils produce writing to the highest standard of which they are capable and that they present their work well
 - teachers, particularly those in Key Stage 2, are given the opportunity of observing and learning from the outstanding teaching which exists in school.

- Raise the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that these pupils receive the right type of support which is tailored to their individual needs
 - improving the use of assessment information to check on their progress more rigorously.

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - the headteacher and other senior leaders have an accurate view about what needs to be improved and have clearer plans as to how improvements will be achieved
 - the curriculum is more effective in capturing the interest of boys and so enables them to improve their learning
 - when the headteacher and other senior leaders check the quality of teaching, they identify more precisely the improvements needed, what needs to be done to bring these about and check more regularly that these measures are working
 - more effective measures are put in place to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent
 - subject leaders for English and mathematics are given the opportunity to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects so they become more effective in evaluating the school's performance and raising achievement

- governors receive clear and accurate information about the way teachers' performance is managed and how teachers are rewarded
- an external review of governance is conducted to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved, so that governors develop the skills needed to hold leaders and managers effectively to account for improving the school.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 May 2014

Evidence

The inspector visited all classrooms and observed six lessons, including observing learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A particular focus was the teaching of early reading and writing, so the inspector observed letters and sounds being taught by adults across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. He observed the work of teachers and teaching assistants working with individual pupils and groups. Daily routines were observed including start-of-day activities, break time and lunchtimes. He scrutinised documents, including the school's plans for improvement and the school's records of pupils' attainment. Meetings were held with the Principal, groups of pupils and three representatives from governing body. Work in pupils' files from across the school was also scrutinised.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the school's context. One teacher is on maternity leave and her class is being taught by a temporary teacher. One teacher resigned and left the school at Easter. Two teachers are absent due to sickness; both have resigned with effect from the end of this term. At the time of this inspection, two classes were being taught by supply teachers. In line with a local arrangement, almost all of the Year 6 pupils have transferred to their new high schools so only one Year 6 pupil was present for this inspection. There are two vacancies on the governing body.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' learning and progress in lessons are generally improving but remain inconsistent in some classes and subjects, particularly in writing. The school's tracking of attainment demonstrates that progress over time is improving but is still variable, with the greatest progress reflecting the best teaching. However, there remains a small core of pupils whose progress is limited and this tends to relate directly to classes and subjects where teaching is less secure or where there has been teacher absence. Across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, a greater emphasis on the teaching of letters and sounds means that more pupils are confident when reading and writing unknown words. This is reflected in the increased proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonic screening check.

Attainment at Year 2 has improved. The school's own assessments indicate that attainment this year is better than it was in 2013, with more pupils reaching Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, none are attaining at the higher Level 3 in any subject. A particular success has been improvements to the progress and attainment of Year 6 pupils, particularly in writing. The recently moderated assessments of Year 6 writing indicate a significant increase in the proportion of

pupils reaching Level 4 and the higher Level 5 compared to any of the previous three years. Work in pupils' writing files shows clear improvements to the content of written pieces and their better spelling, punctuation and grammar. Although the rates of progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding) are generally improving at a similar rate to their peers, their attainment is still a little below that of their peers. The attainment of pupils identified as having disabilities and/or special educational needs is also improving and fewer are now withdrawn from their classrooms for extra help.

The accuracy of assessments, particularly in writing, has improved and teachers are beginning to have greater confidence in their ability to assess pupils' work. Across the school, pupils' written work has improved in terms of quantity and quality but there remains a particular issue in terms of pupils' handwriting. Although this has been identified as an issue by senior leaders it is only in the last half term that the systematic teaching of letter formation has begun in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From the Early Years Foundation Stage up to Year 3 there are many pupils who routinely form letters incorrectly and this is not checked by adults.

The quality of teaching

Improvements to the quality of teaching are evident and have had a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress which was seen in lessons and in pupils' work. However, recent staff absence and changes to the teaching force have slowed the impact of planned developments. Nevertheless, improvements were evident in all classrooms where the substantive teachers were observed, but some teaching remains weak and still requires improvement. The effectiveness of lesson planning has improved so that there is now more often a clearer focus on learning and not just the activities pupils will complete. However, on some occasions tasks are not set at just the right level and some pupils find them too easy and undemanding.

Although improving in some parts of the school, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not consistently high enough. The regular daily teaching of letters and sounds is improving and is clearly helping to develop pupils' reading and writing skills. However, sometimes tasks are undemanding, particularly for more able pupils. The use of teaching assistants has improved so that additional adults play a more active part in helping pupils within lessons. However, on occasion some pupils are a little too dependent on adults and sometimes wait for adults to tell them to go on to the next question, even where they knew exactly what to do. The quality of teachers' marking has improved, particularly in writing and pupils are beginning to undertake corrections to their work; for example, by correcting spellings or grammar. However, the impact of this remains inconsistent, particularly where there have been temporary staff or regular changes to the teacher.

Lessons typically get off to a prompt start. Topics are chosen carefully, often with boys in mind and writing tasks have a clear purpose. For example, some boys said they enjoyed writing letters to the council to argue for improvements to a local playground. The use of 'teach and do' within lessons continues to improve, where

teachers present or explain new ideas and tasks then pupils undertake short activities. Consequently, there is a better balance between the time pupils spend listening to their teachers and the time they spend on tasks. Pupils and teachers say this is helping to secure better learning. The oldest pupils note that since the school became subject to special measure their teachers have made learning and the completion of work a priority. One pupil stated, 'You just can't get away without doing exactly what you are told to and you have to finish every piece of work.'

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Attendance rates and punctuality continue to improve. Consequently, the attendance rate for this academic year is on track to be a little above the national average and the number of persistent absentees is down to just one. In the lessons observed, most pupils behaved very well, responding quickly to their teacher's instructions. Pupils who spoke to the inspector stated categorically that they felt safe and that bullying was rare. Pupils' movement and behaviour around the school was observed to be good. For example, in one whole-school assembly pupils behaved well and watched and listened with interest as a group of pupils came to the front to demonstrate the importance of teamwork.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Improved arrangements for checking on teaching and its impact on learning in Key Stage 1 and 2 classes over each three week period have helped to secure some better teaching. Senior leaders review planning, visit lessons and scrutinise the work pupils produce. Consequently, teachers routinely discuss their approach to learning with senior leaders and this is helping to improve their practice. This approach has challenged some teachers but others have responded positively and the impact was very evident in the improved teaching and learning observed during this inspection. However, senior leaders are accurate in their evaluation that more still needs to be done to improve teaching where it is weak. Performance management is being used well to hold staff to account for the progress of pupils. Improvements to the accuracy and rigor of assessments and tracking show where achievement is improving and identifies the pupils and particular groups of pupils who are not making expected or better progress.

Improvements to the leadership of special educational needs and the work of the special educational needs coordinator have led to more pupils successfully making progress within their classrooms and improvements to the work of teaching assistants. However, the development of middle leaders remains a significant area for development.

Preparations are at an advanced stage for the school to become an academy, sponsored by Rawmarsh Ashwood Primary Academy, and the formal confirmation of the conversion is imminent. A clear staffing structure is in place and a full complement of staff is in place for September, including a new assistant headteacher. An effective induction will be particularly important if the school is to

sustain recent improvements successfully, such as the whole-school approach to planning and marking. Regular meetings with governors mean they have been provided with much information about the school and the impact of recent improvements. Due to the regular and frequent nature of these meetings, the Principal has not provided governors with a termly written report. Governors are clear that when the school becomes an academy a written report would help them in their role. Governors are aware that their role in challenging and supporting the school will be central to the continued development of the school. Governors are considering further ways in which they can work more closely and more efficiently with the governing body of Rawmarsh Ashwood Primary Academy.

External support

The school has continued to benefit from the close partnership with Rawmarsh Ashwood Primary Academy, which has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This has led to secure improvements in pupils' attainment and progress over the past two terms. The local authority support has been appropriate and continued both to challenge and support the school's leaders. The second focused review, funded by the local authority, provided an external view of the school's progress against the key issues. Although senior leaders found it to be a challenging experience, it accurately identified where improvements were being made and where further work was needed.