

Tribal Group  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 0845 123 6001  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 117 315 0430  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) **Direct email:** Fiona.allan@tribalgroup.com

4 November 2010

Mrs H Thompson  
Locum headteacher  
Shepton Mallet Infants School  
Waterloo Road  
Shepton Mallet  
Somerset  
BA4 5HE

Dear Mrs Thompson

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Shepton Mallet Infants School**

Following my visit to your school on 20 and 21 October 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2009. 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 and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted 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 Services for Somerset.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2009**

- Enable the senior leadership team to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in monitoring and evaluating whole-school performance through additional training and coaching.
- Ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory, with a significant proportion that is good, by:
  - ensuring that teachers' planning meets the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring that pupils know what they are expected to achieve by the end of lessons
  - ensuring that day-to-day assessment and marking give pupils a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.
- Ensure that pupils' attendance is above 94% by raising pupils' and parents' understanding of the importance of regular attendance to support good learning and progress.
- Improve pupils' learning and progress so that all groups of pupils achieve as well as similar groups nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Shepton Mallet Infants School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 October 2010**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the locum headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and the School Improvement Partner.

#### **Context**

The substantive headteacher remains on sick leave and the locum headteacher continues to lead the school. Two teachers left the school at the end of the summer term 2010. The deputy headteacher has resigned her post and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed and will take up post in January 2011. One class is being taught by supply teachers until the deputy headteacher arrives. During the inspection two teachers were not at school and the classes were taken by supply teachers.

#### **Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

Unvalidated data from the 2010 National Curriculum assessments show that pupils' attainment in Year 2 was similar to national expectations. This is a significant improvement on the previous year, when attainment was low. The school's own data showed that these pupils made accelerated progress in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the school's robust focus on this year group, which had been identified as being at risk of underachieving. Progress in Year 1 was not as strong, owing in part to the disruption to their learning caused by a reorganisation of classes and changes of teachers. However, observations and an examination of books show that the majority of these pupils are also now making better progress.

Overall in the school, pupils' progress in lessons continues to improve. During the inspection pupils were diligent and focused. There is a positive, working atmosphere throughout the school, with pupils trying hard to produce their best. The school is aware that progress still remains uneven in lessons and between classes. This is linked to the quality of teaching. Challenging targets have been set so that all pupils make good progress and robust monitoring procedures are in place. A number of pupils for whom English is an additional language have recently joined the school. They have settled well and are developing their vocabulary and language skills well.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection:

- Improve pupils' learning and progress so that all groups of pupils achieve as well as similar groups nationally in reading, writing and mathematics – satisfactory.

## **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

The improvement in behaviour has continued. The pupils are polite and friendly. In the classrooms they listen well and move quickly and purposefully between tasks. Any minor distractions are dealt with quickly. One member of staff commented that the school 'is the calmest it has been for a long time'. Pupils respond well to the consistent strategies that have been introduced. The youngest children are confident, demonstrate independence and play and work well together. On the playground pupils play energetically and safely, supervised well by the adults, who engage them in a variety of games. Pupils who are chosen to be a playground helper, a special person or a dining room monitor take their responsibilities very seriously, proud of the sash or tabard that they wear. During the inspection the school celebrated its Harvest festival. All the pupils sang energetically and cheerfully, sharing this happy, community event with their parents and carers, who were rightly proud of their children's behaviour, their hard work and their performance. Attendance has improved and this half of term is above average. It is clear when speaking with the children that they are aware of the importance of coming to school every day and on time.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection:

- Ensure that pupils' attendance is above 94% by raising pupils' and parents' understanding of the importance of regular attendance to support good learning and progress – good.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching continues to improve. All teaching seen is underpinned by effective behaviour management and strong and respectful relationships between adults and pupils. The practice through the school of sharing what the pupils will be learning and the success criteria helps set clear expectations. In the best practice observed a very clear focus on the objectives was maintained throughout the session and repeatedly referred to. In one lesson all pupils knew that full stops, capital letters and finger spaces between words were required as they wrote their pirate stories and tried hard to succeed with this. Grouping the pupils and the use of additional adults continue to be used effectively so that the work is appropriate for pupils at different levels. These small groups are very effective at picking up pupils' misconceptions and checking understanding. At times, pupils are not challenged to make consistently good progress in their learning when the pace of the lesson slows, when the learning intentions are not made clear or when expectations are not high enough for more able pupils. The school's ongoing monitoring confirms the ongoing improvement in teaching but highlights that inadequacies remain. It is taking appropriate action to eliminate these.

The school's assessment of pupils' progress continues to improve. Ongoing reading assessments and moderated writing work give teachers a good indication of progress and pupils' next targets. The school is now about to strengthen its

assessment and moderation of mathematics. The data collected have enabled the school to set challenging targets for all pupils that can be regularly reviewed through pupil progress meetings. The school is aware that there have been some discrepancies in assessment of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is taking action to remedy this. This is important, not only to ensure that individuals are making the best progress they can, but also to provide the school with the necessary information so that they can make secure judgements about the effectiveness of the whole school. Feedback to children is regular and encouraging. The marking policy has yet to be confirmed but effective practice is emerging that gives pupils very detailed feedback on what is good about their work and an improvement point for next time. However, this is not yet consistent through the whole school.

Appropriately, the school has focused a great deal of its attention and resources in ensuring that pupils' progress has been accelerated in reading, writing and mathematics. However, it has also reviewed the curriculum so that there is a coherent approach throughout the whole school. It is early days but this has already given an overall framework to teachers' planning and ensures that there is appropriate coverage of content in the school and tackles any issues of potential inequalities in single-aged or mixed-aged classes. There have been further improvements to the environment, with a large classroom being created for the mixed Year One and Reception class so that a range of different opportunities can be provided. The facilities to care for the physical needs of pupils with disabilities have been significantly improved.

Pupils continue to be cared for well. The consistent reward systems and behavioural expectations are becoming more embedded, with ongoing changes being made, for example, to lining up in the playground to explore whether further improvements can be made. The wide range of strategies to tackle absence and lateness are having an effect. These include a range of rewards for the pupils as well as working with other schools in partnership to support vulnerable families and working with the attendance officer and family support workers to challenge parents and carers who bring their children to school late.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection:

- Ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory, with a significant proportion that is good, by:
  - ensuring that teachers' planning meets the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring that pupils know what they are expected to achieve by the end of lessons
  - ensuring that day-to-day assessment and marking give pupils a clear understanding of their next steps in learning – satisfactory .

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The locum headteacher has built on her good start. She has continued to lead changes that are now having an impact on pupils' learning and behaviour. She has clear and high expectations and has taken difficult decisions. She has also ensured that staff are appropriately supported so that morale is good and there is a whole-school desire to improve things for the pupils.

Senior and middle leaders have increased their confidence and skills considerably. They have a growing knowledge of their particular areas of responsibilities, of data and of the school's priorities. They are carrying out appropriate monitoring procedures and have put in place action plans to ensure that initiatives are consistently implemented and are leading to pupils making good progress toward their targets.

Following the last monitoring visit governors have taken important steps toward improving their effectiveness. The appointment of new, knowledgeable and experienced governors has strengthened the governing body. A restructure of the committee structure is already proving effective in ensuring that meetings are more efficient. Governors have had appropriate training and are now clearer about their role in holding the school to account. As one governor said, 'I now know the importance of asking the questions and asking for the evidence to back up the answer.' There is a clear plan for governor monitoring in place so that they gain an increasing knowledge of the school.

The vast majority of parents and carers spoken to were very happy with the school. They welcomed the recent changes, particularly commenting on improvements in behaviour in the school. They remain loyal to the school and pleased with their child's progress.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection:

- Enable the senior leadership team to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in monitoring and evaluating whole-school performance through additional training and coaching – good.

## **External support**

The school has benefitted from effective ongoing support from the National Leader for Education and from the School Improvement Partner, who provide ongoing support to the locum headteacher on a day-to-day basis. They have also provided support to moderate judgements on teaching and ensure targets are appropriate. Literacy and numeracy consultants have been valuable in improving the skills and knowledge of senior and middle leaders. Governor support services have been instrumental in supporting and strengthening the governing body and preparing the action plan that has improved their effectiveness. The local authority has also

provided effective human resources support. There is some anxiety about whether support will continue in the light of the reorganisation within the education department and the reductions in staffing. This was explored with the local authority representatives and assurances were made that support would continue to be provided.