

Tribal Education  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0845 123 6001  
**Direct F** 0845 123 6002  
**Direct email:** rebecca.jackson@tribalgroup.com

27 January 2011

Mrs H Fox  
The Headteacher  
Okehampton Primary School  
Glendale Road  
Okehampton  
Devon  
EX20 1JB

Dear Mrs Fox

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Okehampton Primary School**

Following my visit with Richard Light HMI to your school on 25 and 26 January 2011, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may 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 Devon.

Yours sincerely

Mary Massey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise standards and improve achievement in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that the curriculum promotes progression in skills from year to year and across key stages, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that all teaching draws on assessment and is closely matched to pupils' different needs.
- Make sure that marking provides all pupils with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their performance.
- Rigorously evaluate the school's effectiveness in order to take swift and focused action for improvement and develop the role of the governing body in holding the school to account.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Okehampton Primary School**

### **Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 January 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the school's senior leaders, governors, teachers and groups of pupils.

#### **Context**

A new assistant headteacher to lead Key Stage 2 and a leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage took up their appointments at the start of this term. Two teachers have gone on maternity leave and have been replaced by temporary teachers.

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

Teacher assessments show that in 2010 pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 rose substantially. Attainment in reading was significantly above the national average and the difference in attainment between boys and girls in both reading and writing was less than that found nationally. Boys did better than girls in mathematics. National test results for Year 6 in 2010 show average attainment in English but in mathematics, results were still below the minimum expected.

Current data and evidence from inspectors' and senior leaders' lesson observations show that across the school, in all year groups, including the Nursery and Reception, the rate of pupils' progress is accelerating. This is particularly evident in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are rapidly making up the legacy of underachievement in previous years. This is partly because the planning for these year groups is very thorough and focused, particularly for the development of writing skills. In addition, teachers are regularly encouraging pupils to share and discuss their work. Progress in other year groups is more variable, but is nevertheless satisfactory overall. The recent focus on developing pupils' writing skills has resulted in pupils making faster progress in English than in mathematics.

The school has now collected reliable information about children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, which means that it will be now be possible to accurately measure progress over time. Regular assessment to track the development of children's skills is now well established.

Overall, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress, with some making good progress. Recent reassessment has reduced the number of these pupils. Their progress in mathematics is better than in reading and writing.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the area for improvement:

- raise standards and improve achievement in writing and mathematics – satisfactory.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils are very happy in school. They say that they feel very safe and are very confident that there is someone to talk to when there are difficulties. The new behaviour policy and rewards system are valued. Pupils particularly appreciate being asked for their opinions and the opportunity to make a contribution to decisions in school, for example through acting as eco-warriors, supporting younger children with reading or manning the reception desk.

A strong focus through pupil assemblies and training for both teaching and non-teaching staff on developing pupils' behaviour for learning is having a positive impact across the school. Older children, for example, are able to talk about the social aspects of learning and can work together very cooperatively in small groups. However, the school recognises that many younger children still lack the skills to listen and cooperate which will allow them and others to learn successfully. A very few children show very challenging behaviour, but this is managed well by teaching and non-teaching staff with the support of external agencies.

Pupils enjoy the increased opportunities for sport, including netball, hockey and table tennis. They have a good understanding of diet and how to lead a healthy lifestyle and are particularly proud of their recent national prize for the school garden.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Teachers are increasingly confident and ambitious to improve. Significant training has also been provided for teaching assistants and their capacity to support pupils effectively is growing. As a result, teaching and the quality of pupils' learning is improving, but is better in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Part of the reason for this difference is the successful development of learning skills for older pupils, who work independently more often and take responsibility for their learning. In these classes, teachers consistently model vocabulary and language linked to learning which is then used by pupils, especially in literacy lessons.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Most teachers use questioning well to encourage sequential learning. In the best lessons, work is well matched to individual pupils' needs and there is a relentless focus on the quality of pupils' learning. However, in less effective lessons, although teachers are using pupils' prior achievement to plan, sometimes the activities are not focused precisely enough on what the teacher intends the pupils to learn, especially in mathematics. This sometimes results in inappropriate behaviour which slows learning. Then, when

summarising at the end of the lesson, teachers focus too tightly on the amount of effort pupils have made, or how much work has been completed, rather than on what has been learnt.

The curriculum for English and mathematics now shows clear progression through the year groups and is confidently implemented by teachers. However, planning in mathematics is not yet precise or sophisticated enough to guarantee that all groups of pupils make progress. Pupils of different abilities are often not aware of exactly what they need to do in the lesson in order to be successful. Although they can readily talk about what it is they need to do to improve in English, particularly writing, they are not so confident in mathematics, and take less responsibility for their own learning. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to identify and tackle misunderstandings. Although there is evidence of increased progress across the school as a result of the recent focus on writing skills, there is still room for further improvement, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Strategies for encouraging oral skills and developing vocabulary, through talking partners and discussion, have been successful, but in some classes pupils' written output is too limited, with not enough emphasis on quiet, extended writing tasks. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their skills.

The quality of marking is improving and is increasingly consistent. The system is well understood by pupils and implemented by teachers. Pupils really enjoy the chance to correct their work and engage in a dialogue with the teacher, but the opportunity to do this is not yet consistent. Assessment information gained from marking is not yet always used to plan effectively for pupils' individual needs, especially those who are more able, who may find themselves repeating work, or given tasks that are not sufficiently challenging. Pupils are increasingly set personalised targets, but these are not consistently and regularly reviewed by teachers, nor reliably transferred when the pupil has a new exercise book.

A new themed curriculum for other subjects was introduced at the start of this term but is not yet having an impact on achievement. Pupils are really enjoying the exciting and stimulating opportunities it has brought – in school, out in the local environment and community and farther afield. The recent exchange with a German school has increased pupils' cultural understanding, and the visit from the Olympic stadium engineers provided a stimulus for design and technology and science in Year 6. The new approach has also generated increased enthusiasm amongst teachers who are using it as the vehicle to drive up expectations. Increasingly, these themes are extended to English and numeracy work. The implementation of this new curriculum is in its early stages. Progression of pupils' skills, for example in information and communication technology, or personal emotional, health, social and economic education, has still to be included in the curriculum plan. So far, assessment opportunities are not explicit, nor are actions to evaluate the impact of this strategy on pupils' learning.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that the curriculum promotes progression in skills from year to year and across key stages, particularly in writing and mathematics – good
- ensure that all teaching draws on assessment and is closely matched to pupils' different needs – satisfactory
- make sure that marking provides all pupils with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their performance – good.

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

Actions taken by senior leaders are very clearly focused, with a rapid and appropriate response to information collected through monitoring. For example, underachievement in writing was identified in one class and an immediate action plan and intervention were put in place. Even in a short time, the new senior staff have begun to have an impact on provision and outcomes. For example, more precise analysis of pupils' needs and the impact of the work of teaching assistants are both due to clear direction and support from the special needs coordinator. Teaching assistants are growing in confidence because of the support they are receiving and are more willing to contribute to whole school issues. With the arrival of new senior leaders, the role of middle leaders is now more precise. They are taking an increasing role in monitoring the impact of provision and outcomes and gaining confidence in monitoring the quality of teaching.

The governing body is increasingly influential. Their awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the efficiency of monitoring are developing rapidly. However, record keeping is not sufficiently systematic, nor does it accurately reflect the decisions and actions of the governing body. Progress on ensuring that the governing body meets its statutory requirements is currently too slow.

Regular, high quality engagement with parents and carers is increasing. They recognise that behaviour has improved. They are particularly appreciative of the new arrangements for home learning, feeling that the work is better matched to pupils' abilities. They are especially pleased that homework is being marked regularly.

The headteacher continues to provide, decisive, responsive and energetic leadership. A secure senior leadership team is now in place. Roles and responsibilities are clear and the direction established and agreed. The underlying, philosophy, values and infrastructure to drive the school forward are now in place. In order to ensure that there is a positive impact on pupils' achievement, the school is starting to implement these principles consistently and embed them into day-to-day practice across the school.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- rigorously evaluate the school's effectiveness in order to take swift and focused action for improvement and develop the role of the governing body in holding the school to account – good.

## **External support**

The school continues to use the support provided by the local authority well. The amount of support provided is reducing and increasingly targeted on very precise areas of weakness.