

Tribal Education
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** 0845 123 6002
www.ofsted.gov.uk **Direct email:** sarah.cartlidge@tribalgroup.com

20 October 2010

Mrs Frances Wilson
The Headteacher
Barn Croft Primary School
2 Brunel Road
London
E17 8SB

Dear Mrs Wilson

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Barn Croft Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 and 6 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 visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in March 2009. 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 – satisfactory.

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 governors and the Director of Children's Services for Waltham Forest.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2009

- Raise standards by improving the quality of teaching so that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. In particular rectify weaknesses in pace, challenge, the use of assessment and the engagement of pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils are safe from bullying, with clear and effective procedures in place to resolve bullying incidents speedily.
- Improve the curriculum, so that it meets the needs of all the pupils, including their personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Ensure that the school is well led and there is a cohesive approach to school improvement, so that all leaders share a common vision and are involved in rigorous monitoring and accurate evaluation.
- Improve communication with parents, particularly ensuring that complaints and concerns are followed up effectively.

Special measures: monitoring of Barn Croft Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 5 and 6 October 2010

Evidence

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, representative pupils from Years 5 and 6, the chair of governors, representatives from the local authority and two subject coordinators. Teaching was observed in all nine classes.

Context

Since the school was last inspected a substantive headteacher has been appointed. She started at the school in September and a new English coordinator was appointed at the same time. The school continues to work closely with Babcock (formerly the VT Group), the local authority and London Challenge in order to raise standards.

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

While standards remain low, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that standards are beginning to rise and that more pupils are making the progress one would expect. Provisional results for Year 6 pupils, who took the national tests in 2010, indicate they did better in English and mathematics than pupils in 2009. More able pupils did particularly well, with the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 in English being close to average. Pupils in Year 2 did less well and there was a significant fall in standards, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Pupils in Year 6 make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. The school's checks on progress indicate there is now generally good achievement across all classes. Those pupils who have been in the school longest tend to do best. If pupils are to realise their potential, this good progress needs to be maintained in order to remedy a history of underachievement.

Those pupils joining Year 1 from the Early Years Foundation Stage did so with levels of skills and knowledge which were lower than in 2009.

Pupils continue to enjoy learning and in most lessons they make good progress. While there is an appropriate focus on English and mathematics, pupils are enthusiastic about other aspects of learning. On the first day of the inspection Years

5 and 6 pupils were on a visit to the Bloomsbury Theatre and returned excited about what they had learned about 'Horrible Science', especially because it was in 3D! They were equally excited about their visit to the Youth Proms at the Royal Albert Hall on the second day of the inspection.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection:

- raise standards by improving the quality of teaching so that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. In particular, rectify weaknesses in pace, challenge, the use of assessment and the engagement of pupils – satisfactory.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour continues to improve and is good in lessons and as pupils move around the school building. Most pupils play together sensibly and behave well on the playground, with consideration for the safety and welfare of others. Staff intervene quickly if they spot behaviour which is inconsiderate to others. Bullying, which was identified as a problem in the last inspection report, is no longer a cause for concern and will not be a focus for future monitoring visits. Clear and effective procedures are now in place. Staff know what they are and apply them speedily and consistently. Pupils say that if they have worries they are happy to approach their teacher who will deal with it. They also recognise that there is a responsibility on the whole school community to make sure that Barn Croft remains a happy, friendly and cohesive place to learn. Attendance is variable and the school is taking a range of measures designed to ensure it improves.

Pupils are increasingly enthusiastic learners. They have positive attitudes to their work and are eager to answer questions, join in with lessons and assume responsibilities. They work particularly well with one another and partner and group working is a strength.

The effectiveness of provision

In some classes the marking of pupils' books is of high quality. It explains clearly how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Comments link well to pupils' targets and pupils are familiar with what their targets are. This good practice has yet to be consistently adopted so that some pupils are less clear about how well they are doing or what their targets are. The quality of teaching is improving and the number of well taught lessons is increasing. Good teaching makes frequent reference to what pupils need to do to improve their work and to the targets in their books. In lessons where learning is strongest teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to learn and consistently share this information with the class. They ask a range of questions to check on pupils' understanding and

ensure that all pupils play an active part. Where new strategies to improve writing are successful they are beginning to accelerate progress. Teachers and pupils are enthused and the pace of learning is good. In some lessons, even where writing is a focus, it takes too long for pupils to begin to write and expectations with regard to the pace and quality of writing are not high enough.

While the quality of teaching is improving it has not yet had time to fully impact on standards.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children are eager and enthusiastic partners in their learning. They share a real sense of fun with the adults who work with them but are also expected to act responsibly. They happily sort out their own whiteboards, pens and board rubbers so that learning gets off to a flying start and no time is wasted.

The curriculum has a clear focus on developing basic skills and on their practical application in other subjects. The school offers a wide range of extra clubs and activities outside of the normal school hours. These include dance, street dance, yoga and drama in addition to a range of sports and games. Pupils say they value these extra opportunities and that they help them to learn and to work collaboratively with their friends. Pupils were proud to learn that the school had achieved second place in the area partnership sports league. The school's commitment to competitive sports has been recognised by the award of the title Waltham Forest 'Sporting Primary of the Year'.

Pupils say that Barn Croft is an increasingly welcoming school and that most pupils get along well together. They say that if there are problems then teachers try to sort them out. Younger pupils in particular also value the help of older peer mentors who help resolve some problems at an early stage. Pupils also contribute to the life of the school through their roles as buddies for younger pupils and as members of the school council. Those spoken to at lunchtime say they enjoy the school meals and they have a good choice of healthy options, such as fruit and salads, in addition to the delicious spicy chicken and home-made lamb burgers.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection:

- improve the curriculum, so that it meets the needs of all pupils, including their personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education – satisfactory.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

There have been significant changes to the senior leadership of the school since the school was placed in special measures and these changes have had an impact on the pace and consistency of school improvement. Some promising strategies, such as the pupil progress meetings, have not had as much impact as hoped since the last monitoring inspection.

The new headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, has started to establish her own vision for school improvement. It has a clear focus on raising standards in English and mathematics so that all pupils do as well as they can. She is committed to ensuring that the school builds on the good work begun last year on ensuring that all pupils achieve well. The short-term school improvement plan is a useful start but it does not fully reflect the school's high aspirations for more able pupils. The newly appointed English subject leader is being well supported and, along with the more experienced leader for mathematics, has a good grasp of standards and knows what needs to be done to raise achievement further.

With the support of external partners, the school has established an accurate picture of the effectiveness of provision, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. All of those who work at the school are committed to ensuring that all teaching is at least good and continues to improve.

At the time of the last inspection the school's procedures for dealing with complaints and concerns from parents were insufficiently effective. The school now has effective procedures for dealing with complaints. Staff are readily accessible to parents and carers at the start and end of the school day. Communications have improved and through initiatives such as the regular newsletter parents are kept well informed about what's going on. While the school is aware of the need to update its website, communication with parents is no longer a concern and will not be a focus for future monitoring visits.

The governing body is well represented by the chair, who has a clear focus on raising standards. The newly established link governors for English, mathematics and inclusion are expected to have a significant impact on the governing body's monitoring of school improvement with more frequent visits and better links.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection:

- ensure that the school is well led and there is a cohesive approach to school improvement, so that all leaders share a common vision and are involved in rigorous monitoring and accurate evaluation– satisfactory.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

External support

Babcock, an independent consultancy service, and London Challenge provide appropriate support for school improvement. The local authority is aware of the need to update the statement of action for the school and match it closely to the school's needs. There has been particularly effective support for improving standards in English in Key Stage 2 and for the newly appointed English coordinator. The headteacher values the support she has received from a colleague headteacher through the National Leaders in Education initiative.

Priorities for further improvement

No further priorities for improvement have been identified