

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:** rebecca.jackson@tribalgroup.com

4 March 2011

Miss Diana Morrell-Glenister
The Headteacher
Highbury Primary School
Dovercourt Road
Cosham
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO6 2RZ

Dear Miss Morrell-Glenister

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Highbury Primary School

Following my visit with Peter Sanderson, Her Majesty's Inspector, and David Marshall, Additional Inspector, to your school on 2 and 3 March 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2010. 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.

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 interim executive board and the Director of Children's Services for Portsmouth.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2010

- Ensure the governing body meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management so that leaders at all levels know how to analyse progress data and use challenging targets to eliminate pupils' low attainment and raise standards.
- Ensure that governors rigorously challenge and support leaders and managers, holding them to account for tackling underperformance and improving the achievement of all pupils to at least satisfactory.
- Provide a rich curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to at least consistently satisfactory or better, ensuring that:
 - teachers' subject knowledge and use of assessment strategies is secure
 - planning is differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils
 - pace and level of challenge in lessons enable pupils to make progress
 - other adults supporting learning are involved at all times
 - expectations of pupils' learning behaviour are consistently high
 - lessons encourage active learning and are enjoyable.
- Improve attendance to broadly average, reduce the number of authorised absences and put measures in place to follow up pupils' first day absences.

Special measures: monitoring of Highbury Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 March 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, observed 16 lessons and looked at a range of pupils' work. Inspectors talked with pupils, staff and parents and carers during the visit and met with the interim headteacher, the chair of the interim executive board and the School Improvement Partner.

Context

In December 2010 a new interim executive board was established and, in January, the headteacher did not return to the school. However, she remains in post until the end of the spring term 2011. On 24 January 2011, a new interim headteacher was appointed until the end of August 2011. One teacher has left the school and one new teacher took up post in January 2011.

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

Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, undertaken during this inspection indicate that pupils' progress is improving across the school. However, there is still considerable variation between classes and year groups. For example, progress is weaker in Years 3 and 4, particularly in writing. Progress in mathematics is more secure than in writing across the school. Pupils' progress in Year 6 has accelerated in recent weeks and more pupils are working at nationally expected levels. Although attainment in Year 2 is rising, it remains below the national average. Senior leaders rightly recognise the need to urgently raise attainment of this year group. Pupils' progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is secure.

Work to raise attainment and boost progress stalled for a while following the inspection. Since the arrival of the interim headteacher, there has been a greater focus on raising attainment. Senior leaders have put in place a robust system to track pupils' progress across the school. Whilst prior attainment data are unreliable, senior leaders have worked successfully to improve the quality and regularity of assessment practice. As a result, current data are more accurate, providing a clear picture of attainment and a good basis to track progress over time.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The interim headteacher has taken decisive action to improve the learning environment for pupils. A warm and welcoming atmosphere is evident, with freshly painted and carpeted corridors and lively and interesting displays of pupils' work which are appreciated by parents, carers and pupils alike. This is helping pupils to feel safe and has served to increase their enjoyment of school. Attendance is improving and is being closely monitored by the interim headteacher and

administrative staff. Good attendance is praised and decisive action is taken where attendance levels are low. Senior leaders are working effectively with the education welfare service and they communicate clearly with parents the need for good pupil attendance. There was a significant dip in attendance in the latter part of the autumn term. However, the first part of the spring term saw a rise in attendance to 94.8%. This improvement in attendance needs to be sustained to ensure pupils access learning opportunities to support their progress and increase their level of attainment.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve attendance to broadly average, reduce the number of authorised absences and put measures in place to follow up pupils' first day absences – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

The school has developed a more creative and enjoyable curriculum, with the support of the local authority, which is particularly engaging for pupils. For example, in Years 3 and 4 the theme of dragons made learning come alive when a dragon's footprint was discovered on the school field! This thematic-based curriculum is at an early stage of development and at present is only in place for the spring term. There is more to be done to ensure that the progression of skills in all subjects and for all year groups is relevant and engaging for all levels of ability. Long- and medium-term plans need to be in place to ensure consistency and coverage of the curriculum.

Effective monitoring of lessons, combined with a range of support, has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Fewer inadequate lessons were observed during this monitoring inspection and a higher proportion of lessons observed were good. These lessons are characterised by the effective use of learning intentions, which are shared with pupils. Tasks and questioning are well matched to the learning needs of all groups of pupils and lessons move at a good pace. However, although most teachers plan for the differing abilities within the class, day-to-day assessments are not used with sufficient precision to fully accelerate learning. Some more able pupils are insufficiently challenged. At times teachers talk for too long, reducing the level of engagement of pupils. Better use is being made of teaching assistants to support learning. Marking is improving, particularly in writing. However, the feedback to pupils remains inconsistent and does not always provide them with enough guidance on how to improve their work. Targets are not used sufficiently well to make a significant impact on pupil progress and the 2011 targets for Year 6 pupils are unrealistic.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- provide a rich curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of all pupils – satisfactory
- improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to at least consistently satisfactory or better – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The interim headteacher has made a positive impact since joining the school five weeks ago. He has quickly established a clear understanding of the work that needs to be done in order to drive forward improvement. For example, he is aware of the need to devise a new school leadership structure in order to ensure a greater capacity for improvement. Clear lines of responsibility are just beginning to be established for senior leaders, but this is at an early stage of development. Leadership capacity beyond the senior leadership team remains under developed and has not been moved forward since the previous inspection. Pupil progress meetings are beginning to hold teachers more accountable for pupils' progress. However, subject leaders are not being given enough responsibility to raise standards and they are not held sufficiently accountable for the progress made by pupils. Some recent initiatives are just beginning to ensure greater consistency in teachers' planning and marking of pupils' work. However, these are at an early stage of development. There is a need to review the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to provide greater consistency and to monitor their progress more effectively.

The interim executive board has brought a range of experience and expertise to the school. The members have tackled the safeguarding issues raised by the previous inspection well and safeguarding arrangements now meet statutory requirements. They are working well with the new interim headteacher and beginning to communicate clear and higher expectations to staff and pupils. A clear direction for improvement is beginning to be established. Regular meetings of the interim executive board ensure that the many aspects the school such as attendance, teaching and learning and finance are being monitored with an increasing level of rigour. However, the interim executive board needs to monitor the impact of the school's actions on pupils' attainment and progress more robustly.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure the governing body meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding – satisfactory
- improve the quality of leadership and management so that leaders at all levels know how to analyse progress data and use challenging targets to eliminate pupils' low attainment and raise standards – inadequate
- ensure that governors rigorously challenge and support leaders and managers, holding them to account for tackling underperformance and improving achievement of all pupils to at least satisfactory – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has revised its action plan and it is now satisfactory, which provides a good basis to move the school forward. It has provided a range of support and has carried out a review of progress since the previous inspection. Support for safeguarding and improving the curriculum have been helpful in moving

the school forward. The interim executive board and the local authority are working well together to support and challenge the school.