

Serco Inspections  
Cedar House  
21 William Street  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 1LH

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

**Serco**  
**Direct T** 0121 683 3888



24 March 2011

Ms K Falconer  
Medway Community Primary School  
St Stephens Road  
Highfields  
Leicester  
LE2 1GH

Dear Ms Falconer

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Medway Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

A newly qualified teacher may be appointed, subject to secure mentoring arrangements, and the school has been invited to discuss any other requirements as may arise.

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 Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Ceri Morgan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2010**

- Raise achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science by:
  - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments
  - making sure teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work that matches the learning needs of different groups pupils, especially the more able
  - ensuring the curriculum has sufficient opportunities for pupils of different abilities to develop their literacy, mathematical and science skills.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is mostly good or better by:
  - using marking that helps pupils understand what they need to do next in order to make progress towards their targets
  - ensuring lessons move at a quick enough pace, especially at the start
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities and ensuring the level of challenge they provide for pupils is sufficiently high, especially those who speak English as an additional language.
  
- Improve attendance so that it is line with the national average.
  
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, and governors, rigorously evaluate and monitor the school's work to bring about rapid improvement by:
  - making effective use of the school's data to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress across cohorts, groups and subjects to inform decisions about how pupils' achievement can be improved
  - holding staff to account for pupils' learning and progress
  - providing teachers with systematic feedback on what they need to do to improve their practice.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Medway Community Primary School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 22 March 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and held several meetings with the headteacher, two leadership teams and the chair of governors from both Medway and their sister school, Sparkenhoe Primary. Inspectors observed 16 lessons and every teacher, met with groups of pupils and conducted a review of strategic school documents, a review of pupils' progress since last time and a sample of pupils' workbooks. A very informal meeting was held with a small sample of parents from each of the two schools.

#### **Context**

There have been few changes since the last monitoring letter in December 2010. The headteacher is seconded from her substantive post at Sparkenhoe Primary for at least two years and staffing is settled. Numbers of pupils on roll remain stable at 460. The school has advertised for a permanent deputy headteacher and hopes for the post to be filled in the coming weeks.

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

Although improving rapidly, pupils' attainment is low. However, the progress being made is now much closer to the national average representing a significant step up in expectation and achievement. Attainment on entry to the school is well below expectations and many pupils are in the very early stages of learning English or have no spoken English at all. As a consequence, much time is rightly invested in the Nursery and Reception classes on developing speaking and listening skills. This is helping improve vocabulary and oracy, but writing skills remain below average throughout the school. Standards of reading remain below average by age seven and 11, and a significant gap is evident between the standards achieved by boys in literacy and those for girls, with boys underachieving.

However, much is improving. The quality and quantity of handwriting are now satisfactory and pupils use a wide vocabulary. Recent school-wide work on improving sentence construction and basic grammar is paying dividends. Pupils in one class, for example, happily discussed how they might use an 'embedded subordinate clause' in their writing. The school now generates accurate data on pupils' attainment and progress which indicate that, although only around 50% of pupils are working at levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, the progress being made by pupils is satisfactory. Teachers now use these data well in their planning and they are also used in the bi-monthly meetings at which the progress being made by individual pupils is discussed. These figures

vary considerably, however, between classes and the range is wide. Attainment in mathematics is low and proving stubbornly resistant to improvement. Although basic number skills are much more secure, pupils show a fragile ability to apply these skills in problem solving or real-life contexts, and their understanding of fractions, percentages and decimals is weak.

The progress being made by all pupils is much more positive, however. Here, progress in writing and mathematics is close to satisfactory. This is a significant achievement. Around two thirds of pupils in most classes are making expected progress and this proportion is growing. Pupils enjoy their lessons, show very good attitudes to learning and, in most classes, there is genuine enthusiasm. Although only one science lesson was observed, a book scrutiny shows that pupils can conduct practical experimentation, record results and analyse these with increasing accuracy. The focus on practical science sessions has helped generate enthusiasm and interest in pupils. Although the expected proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in national tests was low in 2010, it is expected to increase significantly in 2011. This is partly due to some additional sessions put on for pupils who show significant ability, for example, sessions on writing skills led by a published author. It is also due to good support available in classrooms and additional intervention for pupils who need extra support. The school has introduced some good levers for further improvement. The one that pupils are very keen on is receiving a 'golden pen' when their writing improves.

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

- Raise achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science – good

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' behaviour is good. They say themselves that this has improved significantly in the last few months. Bullying and racist behaviour are minimal. Pupils are polite and welcoming, and they want to work hard. When the school was last inspected, attendance levels were low, but they are now satisfactory and rising. There remain some groups whose attendance is still low, particularly pupils from Roma backgrounds, but a combination of rewards, phone calls, analysis and rigorous action is leading to some significant successes. Pupils are particularly excited at the prospect of a reward of a 'chocolate fountain' for those who attend well. The school acknowledge that, while this particular reward might not sit easily with their strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles, it is a genuine motivational tool which is bringing success. There have been no exclusions this year.

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

- Improve attendance so that it is line with the national average - good

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Teaching is improving in quality and is now satisfactory. It is leading to better achievement and some strengths are found throughout the school. These include good relationships with pupils, thoughtful planning which takes account of different needs and abilities, and clearer lesson objectives. Planning now takes greater account of statutory National Curriculum requirements. Teachers now accurately measure the level of pupils' work and are precise in their guidance to pupils, either through measured comments in lessons or through much improved marking. Increasingly, teachers explain to pupils what level their work is at and provide guidance on what is required to improve it to a higher level. The key improvement is that teachers are keen to implement change and are working hard to put in place the advice and support they receive. As a consequence, for example, questioning is much more effective in assessing pupils' understanding and in promoting higher challenge and pace. The vocabulary used by teachers is now precise and accurate, although they do not always model good handwriting on their interactive whiteboards.

There are also some common weaknesses, however. Teachers still have a tendency to 'deliver' their lessons, irrespective of the response from pupils. They seek out answers they hope for, rather than responding to the answers they actually receive and using them for assessing understanding or resolving misconceptions. This is especially evident in mathematics lessons and results in sessions which are dominated by 'teacher talk' for too long, particularly when introducing lessons. Expectations remain low, again particularly in mathematics, and pupils occasionally repeat lessons from previous years unnecessarily. In some lessons, the content, although showing higher expectation, is overly technical and loses impact. For example, pupils can explain detailed technical grammar but do not always then use it in improving their writing. As a consequence of these weaknesses, pupils are not given enough opportunity to use and apply their growing skills in a variety of contexts.

Following a recent revision, the curriculum is more appropriate for all pupils and is more exciting and practical. It is enhanced by clubs and additional support sessions which pupils enjoy. The limited progress in mathematics, however, shows this aspect of the curriculum remains capped by teachers' insecure subject knowledge and low expectations.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is mostly good or better – satisfactory

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

Leadership shown by the headteacher is visionary, rigorous and focused on simple but highly effective ways to improve pupils' attainment. There is some change yet to come at deputy headteacher level, following the recent advertisement for the

vacancy, but day-to-day management, a rapid response to areas identified as problematic and a sense of ambition are evident throughout. This high-quality leadership is especially appreciated by pupils, parents and carers. In a brief meeting with parents who have pupils at Medway and their partner school, Sparkenhoe, it was clear the local community rightly see her as a successful and energetic leader. A rigorous monitoring programme involves subject and other leaders and provides a close focus on the progress made by pupils. All teachers receive regular feedback about their performance. Indeed, teachers receive such feedback in a variety of formats every two weeks. This programme is leading to a significant improvement in the performance of both adults and pupils in school, but it is not yet always converted into practical advice for teachers' professional development. One example of the impressive responsiveness of leadership is how, disappointed to hear at the last inspection that pupils had little pride in their school, it developed a series of changes to make them feel proud. This has worked. Pupils now say they have a real pride in their work and school and are impatient to start using their new uniform.

Governance is much improved and is satisfactory. Additional governors with relevant experience have been added and the group, always supportive, now holds the school to account with greater rigour. The premises themselves are in desperate need of some refurbishment, and the governing body is keen to implement some exciting plans. Pupils and adults alike, for example, are keen to see the back of the toilet blocks which are well beyond their best days.

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

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, and governors, rigorously evaluate and monitor the schools' work to bring about rapid improvement – good

### **External support**

The school benefits from a close working relationship with the neighbouring school, Sparkenhoe Primary School, and shares some resources and staff development activity. There has also been effective additional support from the local authority and an independent consultant. The impact of this collective external support is good.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the quality of teaching yet further by increasing the proportion of teaching judged to be good. Achieve this by sharing classroom practice via a peer coaching and mentoring programme and ally this to core school priorities.
- Increase pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics by improving teachers' subject knowledge and providing greater opportunities to use and apply number skills in a variety of contexts and problem solving.