

CfBT Inspection Services T 0300 1231231
Suite 22 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
West Lancs Investment Centre www.ofsted.gov.uk
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Direct T 01695 566858
Direct F 01695 729320
lcarruthers@cfbt.com
www.cfbt-inspections.com



18 May 2011

Mrs B Nicholson
Acting Headteacher
Halfway Junior School
Halfway Centre
Halfway
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S20 4TA

Dear Mrs Nicholson

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Halfway Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 16 and 17 May 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 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

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 Sheffield.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

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

- Focus all leaders on accelerating progress by:
 - setting ambitious targets and making sure that all staff have high expectations of all pupils
 - using the outcomes of accurate self-evaluation to highlight priorities and produce focused plans which are regularly monitored and evaluated.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - enabling teachers to recognise National Curriculum levels in core subjects and use these levels to help plan challenging lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment data about pupils when planning lessons to match pupils' learning needs.

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress so that attainment is raised, particularly in the core subjects by ensuring that teachers:
 - monitor pupils' progress more closely in lessons and take quick and effective action where there is underachievement
 - provide pupils with clear feedback so they know exactly what to do to improve.

Special measures: monitoring of Halfway Junior School

Report from the third monitoring inspection from 16 to 17 May 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with staff, pupils, representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection two teachers have left the school and one part-time member of staff has announced their intention to retire at the end of the summer term. Three new teachers have been appointed and will take up their posts in September.

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

School data indicate Year 6 pupils are on track to exceed pupils' attainment in 2010 in English and sustain improvements achieved in mathematics. This is notable given the lower prior attainment of the current Year 6 pupils on entry to the school. Rising standards and better progress reflect the significant improvements in teaching quality and leadership since the school's last section 5 inspection. A similar picture of improvement is also evident in Year 5; twice as many pupils are already working at or beyond the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics when compared with Year 5 pupils in 2010.

Pupils' progress is improving. Progress was at least satisfactory and good or better in half of the lessons seen during this monitoring inspection. Frequently in satisfactory lessons identifiable groups of pupils were making good progress. For example, in literacy and numeracy lessons observed, pupils with special educational needs made better progress because they were provided with effective support from a teaching assistant.

Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved, particularly in Years 5 and 6. They willingly embark upon tasks and try hard to do their best work; thoughtfully raising their own questions to extend their knowledge or striving to be the first to find a solution to a mathematical problem.

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

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress so that attainment is raised particularly in the core subjects – good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' attendance overall remains high. The school is working closely with parents and outside agencies to support the very small minority of pupils who have concerning absence

levels. Pupils are rightly proud of their 'learning logs' which were introduced in the spring term. The logs provide a valuable and enjoyable home-learning experience that consolidates or extends class-based work across the curriculum while developing pupils' independent learning skills. Both boys and girls appreciate the freedom to make choices about the content they will include for each task and the flexibility to be creative in how they demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is improving and ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. In addition, all satisfactory teaching observed featured a number of good elements; particularly teachers' use of assessment to check pupils' understanding and move learning on during the lesson. This improvement reflects the positive impact of work, including joint planning, peer coaching and team teaching, to develop classroom practice. Teachers are planning more carefully to meet the needs of different pupils and using a greater variety of teaching strategies and resources to support learning and promote engagement and enjoyment. Factors resulting in satisfactory rather than good pupil progress in lessons included missed opportunities to exemplify key learning points or link starter activities to the main learning; chosen methods limiting the learning for higher attaining pupils; and instances where particular groups of pupils needed to develop further their ability to work without direct adult supervision. Teachers rightly recognise that pupils' independent learning remains an area for development for a small minority of pupils, particularly lower down the school. They continue to provide a broad range of opportunities to increase pupils' confidence in this respect. Pupils have an increasing understanding of their current level of working and there is some strong practice in providing pupils with clear feedback so they know what to do to improve their work. However, the use of good quality written feedback on pupils' work to support progress is not consistent across the school.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

There is an unrelenting focus by senior and middle leaders on driving rapid improvement in provision and outcomes. Since the last monitoring inspection middle leaders have taken on more responsibility for monitoring and evaluating pupil outcomes and provision. They are more confident when interrogating pupil progress data to identify underperformance and have developed their lesson observation skills to enable them to judge teaching quality accurately. Capacity to bring about improvement using 'in-house' good and outstanding practice is rapidly developing with effective use still being made of external partnerships to enhance school-based expertise. Beneficial partnerships with the feeder infant school are also developing to support transition and better partnership working. Challenging pupil targets and regular, robust monitoring of their progress towards them are proving to be a key driver in raising standards and ensuring class teachers take responsibility for securing

pupils' progress. In addition, carefully chosen actions to tackle identified underachievement are helping to accelerate pupils' progress in all year groups. Governors are increasingly effective in their monitoring of the school's progress. Link governor roles are developing and school visits have provided governors with a greater insight into the day-to-day life of the school. The skills and expertise of individual governors are being utilised with increasing effect to meet the school's needs. Governors are rightly focused on securing a high quality and sustainable senior leadership arrangement for the school and are looking at a range of strategic options for the long term.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Focus all leaders on accelerating progress – good

External support

Local authority support is effective and adaptive to the changing needs of the school. Significant time has rightly been invested in supporting the governing body in securing the best possible strategic leadership solution for the school. External reviews continue to provide a valuable perspective on the school's progress, providing senior leaders with a welcome challenge and the opportunity to validate their own evaluation.