

Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566932

Direct F 01695 729320

hcarnall@cfbt.com



17 June 2011

Mrs J Connor
Headteacher
Leigh Primary School
Walker Lane
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 5PL

Dear Mrs Connor,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Leigh Primary School

Following my visit with Sarah Drake, additional inspector, to your school on 15 and 16 June 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 May 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 Tameside.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics to bring it in line with national expectations, by ensuring that methods of teaching numeracy are applied consistently and effectively by all staff.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - rigorous and effective monitoring of the quality of teaching
 - developing the effective use of ongoing informal assessment in lessons
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of marking and in the use of learning targets for individuals, so that pupils always have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work and of what the next steps in their learning should be.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on raising attainment and ensure that the school meets all of its statutory responsibilities by:
 - developing and implementing a strategic long-term plan for the school's improvement, tailored to meet the needs of the school and its pupils
 - ensuring that provision to safeguard pupils meets all statutory requirements
 - ensuring that the governing body provides challenge as well as support and that it holds the school fully to account for pupils' attainment and progress and for the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding provision.
- Improve attendance, by developing and implementing a programme of concerted and effective actions to promote good attendance.

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Leigh Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 15 and 16 June 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised a range of documents and observed 12 lessons and an assembly. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching staff, support staff, pupils, the Chair and a member of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection in February 2011, three teachers, previously on fixed-term contracts have been appointed on permanent contracts, including a newly qualified teacher.

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

The school has continued to improve the overall rate of pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, since the previous inspection. Attainment in mathematics for Year 2 pupils at both expected and higher levels has increased, when compared to the results in 2010. Assessment data and evidence from lesson observations and workbooks support this positive picture. In Year 6, the percentage of pupils on course to achieve at least the expected level in mathematics is higher than in the previous three years. Although attainment remains low, evidence indicates that all year groups are now making at least expected progress in mathematics, with better progress evident in Year 2 and Year 6.

In English, there is also evidence of improvements in achievement in both reading and writing in all year groups. However, school leaders are fully aware that pupils' progress is currently more variable in English than in mathematics. For example, while pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 have made accelerated progress in reading since September, Year 5 pupils have made less than expected progress. Attainment, although steadily rising, particularly in writing, remains low in both key stages.

The school's analysis of assessment data, together with information from 'pupil progress' meetings, has enabled leaders to closely monitor the attainment and progress of individual pupils and year groups. The school has identified and is providing well-targeted support for both potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff training has also recently taken place to develop further strategies to support those pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, school leaders recognise that a sharper focus is now required on the achievement of all key groups, through a more rigorous analysis of assessment information, to ensure that any underperformance is quickly identified and robustly tackled.

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics to bring it in line with national expectations, by ensuring that methods of teaching numeracy are applied consistently and effectively by all staff - good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' attendance has improved significantly. Whole-school attendance since the previous monitoring inspection in February has been at least above average, with the overall figure since September now close to the national average.

The school, especially through the work of the learning mentor, has successfully maintained a high focus on this priority. A range of strategies, including the weekly race horse challenge, certificates and reward trips, which have enthused both pupils and staff, and effective communication with families have secured an increase in the attendance rate, with a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Notably, attendance in all Key Stage 2 year groups has improved consistently since the start of the academic year. The school is working vigorously, particularly with a number of pupils and families in Year 2, to ensure a similar improvement in Key Stage 1 overall. Procedures to register and monitor late arrival in school have also been clarified; as a result, punctuality is improving.

Pupils report that they feel safe and enjoy school because of a number of improvements, including the quality of their lessons and behaviour. School councillors are continuing to develop their role, particularly in raising funds for playground equipment and liaising with the parent teacher association.

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

- Improve attendance, by developing and implementing a programme of concerted and effective actions to promote good attendance - good

The effectiveness of provision

The majority of lessons observed by inspectors were good, with no inadequate provision evident. Observations included lessons in both key stages and in a range of subjects. School leaders have maintained their focus on developing consistency between year groups and key stages, with evidence of improvements in the quality of questioning and the activities set for different ability groups in lessons; these were key priorities from the previous monitoring inspection.

Strengths in those lessons where pupils made good progress included: the quality of planning, including the consistent use of the acronyms WALT and WILF to help pupils to understand the learning objective and the expected outcomes; good quality whole-class and

individual questioning, with teachers refocusing in response to pupils' ideas to further develop pupils' thinking and their understanding; activities which were well matched to pupils' different levels of ability, and effective team work, in both supporting and challenging pupils, between teachers and teaching assistants. These aspects were particularly evident in mathematics lessons, and overall in Key Stage 1.

Regular marking is evident in workbooks for all subjects, with detailed comments, particularly in literacy and numeracy books, highlighting areas for further improvement. The school is currently reviewing the link between pupils' individual and group targets and the quality of marking, with the introduction of 'learning ladders' in literacy, and the increasing use of symbols to ensure pupils know how they can improve their work to reach their targets.

However, school leaders recognise that the link between pupils' assessment information, lesson planning and classroom practice, including targets and marking, is not yet strong enough to enable all pupils to make consistently good progress across the school, and as a result, significantly raise their attainment.

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

- improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better - satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher has continued to focus sharply on the school's improvement agenda. Senior leaders, subject leaders and staff have continued to respond well, with examples of effective improvement on the key inspection areas and the school's wider agenda, including literacy, behaviour and the engagement of pupils, parents and carers.

Clarity in communication and precise, easily understood documentation have ensured that the responsibilities and expectations of staff and leaders are clearly outlined and all are now able to see the part they play, collectively and as individuals, in moving the school forward. Subject leaders for those areas other than English and mathematics have now started to monitor planning and workbooks and the literacy subject leader has continued to observe lessons and further develop provision across both key stages. Science provision, however, as the school is aware, requires further review and development.

Robust improvement planning, with regular evaluations and checks against key criteria ensures that school leaders are able to closely monitor performance and swiftly refocus, where necessary. As a result, school leaders are continuing to review the collection, analysis and use of assessment in lessons.

The school's rigorous monitoring and evaluation cycle, including lesson observations, planning and workbook scrutiny, and 'pupil progress' meetings has ensured that the

momentum of improvement, evident at the previous inspection, has been maintained. The deputy headteacher has continued to support, challenge and effectively develop individual teachers and, more recently, teaching assistants through both observation and training. Since the previous inspection, school leaders' observations, have included a wider range of subjects across the school; their judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate and teachers value the feedback that they receive.

The governing body is continuing to strengthen its impact on the school's work. The increasing involvement of its members in reviewing and reporting on a range of areas, including, for example, attendance, the Early Years Foundation Stage, literacy and the development of the school council is helping them to secure and maintain an accurate picture of the school's work, and respond with appropriate support and challenge. The interim strategic group has maintained its focus on the key inspection areas, with detailed reports presented on literacy, and teaching and learning. Safeguarding arrangements have been enhanced further, with health and safety checks completed and the development of a new secure entrance area.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on area for improvement:

- improve the impact of leadership and management on raising attainment and ensure that the school meets all of its statutory responsibilities - good

External support

The local authority's actions remain well focused and in line with the increasing capacity of school leadership. Support and advice on assessment, personnel issues and governance have enabled the school to increase the pace of improvement in a number of key areas since the previous inspection. The school also continues to benefit from Greater Manchester Challenge funding, with examples of professional development for leadership, teaching and the achievement of key groups, notably pupils who speak English as an additional language. Partnership arrangements with a local school to further develop Early Years Foundation Stage provision remain in place.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve further, the consistency of teaching and pupils' progress in lessons, by strengthening the link between learning objectives, differentiated activities, marking and targets.
- Analyse more sharply, the assessment information of key groups of pupils.