

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

24 June 2011

Mrs S Heath
The Interim Headteacher
Ash Grange Primary School
Ash Church Road
Ash
Aldershot
Hampshire
GU12 6LX

Dear Mrs Heath

Special measures: second monitoring inspection of Ash Grange Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 and 23 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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.

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 the Interim Executive Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

James Henry
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure that leaders, managers and the governing body take steps urgently to accelerate the pace of improvement by:
 - evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour
 - monitoring all initiatives carefully so that effective practice becomes embedded and inconsistencies eliminated.
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that:
 - all entries in the school's single central record are complete and up-to-date by the end of December 2010
 - all other weaknesses pertaining to safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully addressed by the beginning of March 2011.
- By July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics by:
 - setting higher expectations in lessons for pupils' achievement and their rates of working
 - improving the guidance for pupils, particularly through marking which better indicates the next steps in their learning and make more rigorous use of learning targets
 - clarify the roles of teaching assistants so that they support pupils' learning effectively and consistently well
 - paying more attention to pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys.
- Improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011.

Special measures: monitoring of Ash Grange Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 June 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, observed lessons and examined pupils' work. The inspector also met with the interim headteacher, the headteacher elect, senior leaders and seconded members of staff, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board of Governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the school has continued to be led by an interim headteacher on a part-time basis. The interim executive governing body, supported by the local authority, has appointed a permanent new headteacher who will be in post for September 2011. There have been no significant staff changes since the last inspection, although two teachers are leaving the school in July 2011. The roles and responsibilities of teaching assistants have been reviewed and changed.

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

Attainment remains low and generally below the levels expected for the pupils' ages across both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, more pupils are beginning to make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, especially across Key Stage 1, although progress still remains inconsistent. For example, progress in reading and mathematics is better than writing across Key Stage 1, while in Key Stage 2 progress in writing is better than reading and mathematics. Senior leaders are now using regular assessments of pupils' work to effectively identify areas of weakness. They are also holding frequent pupil progress meetings with teachers to implement strategies to address underachievement. This is starting to increase the rate at which pupils learn, although this is variable in different subjects and in different classes. However, pupils do show enjoyment in their learning. For example, Year 1 pupils were cooperating well and enjoying learning about vampire bats. Key Stage 2 pupils were writing for a purpose through producing persuasive letters to the governing body asking for money to develop the school garden.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The school has introduced new strategies to improve behaviour. This includes a new behaviour policy that has been sent to parents and involves them in the process of promoting good behaviour. It also stresses a positive approach to dealing with any inappropriate behaviour and is being used consistently by staff. Initiatives such as involving pupils in 'relax and calm' sessions, introduced by the seconded inclusion manager, are helping to improve the general behaviour around the school. For

example, pupils were well behaved during assembly and entered and left the hall quietly. However, there are still instances in a few lessons where pupils, especially boys, exhibit low level disruption, for example talking while the teacher is explaining the purpose of a lesson. The number of exclusions has fallen since the last inspection and senior leaders now have accurate data showing exclusions amongst the different groups of pupils. As a result, the school is now putting strategies in place to meet the needs of the groups of pupils most at risk of being excluded from school on a temporary basis.

The school has been proactive in promoting good attendance through the use of class awards. This has resulted in the attendance of some classes improving. However, attendance overall continues to be below the national average. The school has been working with outside partners, including the Traveller Education agency to stress to parents and carers the need for good attendance. This has had some effect, for example more pupils now attend when their birthday falls on a school day. Also, requests for holidays during term time are routinely refused. Despite the school's best efforts, some parents and carers still take their children out of school unnecessarily during term time and this is slowing the rate at which these pupils learn. As a result, the school have now successfully taken legal proceedings against parents and carers whose children miss school without good reason.

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

- develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys – satisfactory
- improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011 – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has improved and is now securely satisfactory overall. Staff continue to work with English and mathematics consultants to improve their use of assessment to plan lessons and activities that meet the needs of different groups of pupils. This is beginning to increase the rate at which pupils learn, but has yet to raise attainment across the school. Teachers and other staff have higher expectations of pupils and there is an established and consistent approach to teaching in lessons. This is beginning to show in pupils' work, with some good examples of pieces of extended writing in Key Stage 2.

The marking of pupils' work has also improved. This is due to the hard work of staff in implementing a new marking policy that is being used consistently throughout the school. While teachers routinely comment on pupils' work and give advice about how to improve further, teachers do not consistently plan follow-up activities that allow pupils to build on the guidance given. Targets in English and mathematics have been introduced, but these are not used consistently across the school to help pupils

improve. A new approach to developing pupils' handwriting has been introduced and this is starting to improve pupils' presentation of work.

The role and responsibilities of teaching assistants have been reviewed and changed and further training is planned to develop their effectiveness in lessons. They continue to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well in activities but can sometimes be passive or having to deal with low level disruptions from a small minority of pupils during the introduction to lessons.

Progress since the monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- by July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The interim headteacher has been successful in including other senior and middle leaders in more effectively monitoring the work of the school. They are also holding regular pupil progress meetings with staff and now have a clearer understanding of where initiatives need to be placed to increase the rate at which pupils learn and therefore raise attainment. This will give the new incoming headteacher, who has been visiting the school on a regular basis, a clearer overview of the areas for development. The interim executive governing body, while continuing to be supportive, is also providing challenge and holding senior leaders to account for the progress towards tackling the areas for improvement. While more focused monitoring has had a positive impact on the work of the school, for example in addressing areas of inadequate teaching and starting to improve pupils' progress, it has not yet had a marked impact on raising attainment.

The improvements in safeguarding procedures identified at the last monitoring visit have been maintained. The deputy headteacher has undertaken the appropriate child protection training and all staff have received updated safeguarding training. As well as updating the child protection policy, the school has also reviewed and changed other policies that relate to safeguarding pupils, such as behaviour, health and safety and anti-bullying.

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

- ensure that leaders and managers and the governing body take urgent steps to accelerate the pace of improvement by evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour and monitoring all initiatives carefully so that effective practice becomes embedded and all inconsistencies are eliminated – satisfactory
- ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that all entries into the school's single central record are complete by the end of December 2010 and all other weaknesses pertaining to safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully addressed by the beginning of March 2011 – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority continues to provide considerable and necessary support for the school through the use of English and mathematics consultants who are working with staff to improve their teaching. Also, the local authority has provided funding to pay for two successful secondments to the school, one an experienced headteacher and the other an inclusion manager. Both have been effective in working with parents and carers in promoting good behaviour and providing support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The local authority adviser also continues to provide effective challenge for the leadership team within the school.