

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 566934
Direct F 01695 729320
gtunncliffe@cfbt.com
www.cfbt-inspections.com



15 July 2011

Mrs C Wain
Headteacher
Abingdon Primary School
Abingdon Road
Middlesbrough
North Yorkshire
TS1 3JR

Dear Mrs Wain,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Abingdon Primary School

Following my visit with Mr David Brown, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 July 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 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, Families and Learning for Middlesbrough.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 8 February 2010

- Raise attainment and improve the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science, by:
 - improving the management of teaching and learning by leaders at all levels so that teaching enables pupils to learn at a much faster and more consistent pace
 - making sure that planned learning activities meet the individual needs of all pupils
 - ensuring teachers make more effective use of day-to-day information about what pupils have learnt, in order to increase the pace of learning
 - making effective use of enrichment activities to develop pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Ensure that safeguarding procedures fully meet government requirements.
- Improve attendance to at least the national average.

Special measures: monitoring of Abingdon Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection from 13 to 14 July 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including fifteen lessons, scrutinised documents and held discussions with pupils, staff, the two headteachers, the future headteacher, the governing body monitoring group and the Head of Learning Nought to 19 from the local authority.

Context

There have been few changes since February. One teacher has returned from maternity leave and one is on long-term sickness leave. The school's refurbishment continues apace with Year 5 and Year 6 classes completed and Year 4 and Year 3 to be completed before the start of the new term. A headteacher from a local school has been appointed as the permanent headteacher for Abingdon from September 2011. She is already working with the current school leaders in planning and organising the new school year and has observed teachers' lessons and talked to pupils. The school remains oversubscribed in many year groups with a waiting list for children's entry into Reception class.

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

Improvements in pupils' achievement noted at the last monitoring visit have continued. However, improvements are not evident in the provisional national test results for pupils in Year 6. These pupils entered Key Stage 2 with well-below average attainment and despite the robust actions taken, including improvements in the quality of teaching, leaders have had too little time to rectify fully the history of underachievement and weaknesses in teaching from previous years. Nevertheless, taking their starting points into account the pupils have made progress. Inspection evidence shows their progress accelerated rapidly from September 2010, and especially so in the last four months, but not enough to narrow the gap between their attainment and the national average. Current end of Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 2 assessments show much improvement on previous years and the gap between the school's results and that found nationally is narrowing well. Lesson observations, book scrutinies and school information on pupils' past and current achievements show that pupils' progress in lessons across the school continues to improve and they are making at least satisfactory and often good progress in their lessons. Since the last visit, leaders have taken decisive action to tackle the underachievement in Year 3 and this is making a positive difference to pupils' progress and confidence in lessons but it is too early to see the impact in better end-of-year outcomes.

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

- raise attainment and improve the progress pupils are making in English, mathematics and science – good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Leaders continue to take robust action to increase pupils' attendance. Rates are much improved and are now average and there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Close working with families has resulted in a significant fall in the number taking extended holidays during term time, although this is still an issue in some classes. In Year 6, this has had a detrimental impact on the school's Key Stage 2 test results. Pupils behave well. They say behaviour is good and improving and put this down to the great reward system, of which they are particularly proud, and the more-interesting lessons. Pupils' care and support for one another are often exemplary. They are very welcoming to the many pupils from diverse communities who arrive at different times during the year.

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

- improve attendance to at least the national average – good

The effectiveness of provision

The good practice in teachers' planning emerging at the time of the last visit is being successfully embedded in English and mathematics and this is contributing to pupils' better progress in lessons. The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is increasing, inadequate teaching has been eliminated and satisfactory teaching is minimal through strategies, such as sharing good practice within the school and in the partner school, professional development opportunities and, when necessary, robust performance management arrangements. Good relationship between adults and pupils and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning are typical of all lessons observed. Teachers are much more confident in using the regular assessment information and day-to-day information they gather about pupils' achievements to set tasks in lessons that match their different starting points and to help them to move on more quickly in their learning. Occasions where teachers teach the same thing to all pupils despite their different abilities are increasingly rare in English and mathematics but more common in other subjects. Leaders are aware of this but their current focus is rightly in ensuring improvement in English and mathematics. Teaching assistants are deployed much more effectively in lessons, through training and development opportunities and their involvement in teachers' planning and review of pupils' work. As a result, they are contributing more successfully to pupils' learning.

The quality of marking is more consistent across the school and where it is good, it is very informative. All teachers are now setting individual pupil targets but there are still occasions when these are not tied closely enough to the work pupils are doing. Pupils talk knowledgeably about their targets and the progress they are making towards them. They say they know how well they are doing because teachers mark their work regularly and

provide feedback to them during lessons and because their targets change when they achieve them. The transformation of the science curriculum, improvements in leadership and the quality of teaching in the subject have resulted in pupils' improved progress in science lessons. The school continues to provide a vast range of enrichment activities within the classroom and without. Pupils speak very highly about these opportunities and how they are adding to their enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning. They say they particularly like the way teachers link visits out of school to subjects back at school. For example, the interesting literacy work they completed following their farm visit or the recent visit to a regional theme park.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders, staff and the governing body remain resolute in their drive to improve pupils' achievements and all have been energised by the challenges they have faced over the past year. Leaders continue to build on the improvements to safeguarding procedures that followed on quickly from the last inspection and arrangements remain robust. In discussions with pupils, they confirm the improvements in teaching, in their attendance, the interesting lessons, the much improved attitudes they have to learning and in the better progress they are making. The roles of middle leaders are extending well and they have taken responsibility for the regular pupils' progress meetings with staff. These meetings now include a rigorous focus on pupils' progress towards their individual targets. Staff say they feel valued and welcome their increased accountability and fuller involvement in the school's improvement. They know the changes made by leaders over the past year are making a positive difference to pupils' achievement and this is making their efforts worthwhile. The governing body is successfully holding the leaders to account through members' increased involvement in the life of the school, regular evaluation of pupils' progress information and rigorous monitoring of actions identified within the school improvement plan.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- ensure that safeguarding procedures fully meet government requirements – good

External support

Support from the local authority remains good and appropriate. As the school's capacity to become self-sustaining increases, the local authority's role is now moving towards an approach of advice and guidance, with the added rigour of interventions similar to that provided to all schools in Middlesbrough who have likewise failed to meet the government's floor standards for English and mathematics.