

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Serco**
www.ofsted.gov.uk **Direct T** 0121 683 3888



17 November 2011

Mrs Cheryl Henderson
Slater Primary School
Slater Street
Leicester
LE3 5AS

Dear Mrs Henderson

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Slater Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 and 16 November 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2009. 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 – satisfactory.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

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

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - introducing robust assessment procedures that give teachers the necessary information to ensure that lessons are challenging and matched closely to pupils' prior attainment
 - ensuring that basic skills are reinforced effectively through work in all subjects
 - ensuring that the curriculum is modified effectively to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language
 - planning work that motivates and inspires pupils and promotes enjoyment in learning.

- Improve procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils by:
 - introducing effective induction procedures for the many pupils who join the school throughout any given year
 - taking a more rigorous approach to promoting regular attendance.

- Strengthen arrangements for securing pupils' welfare and safety issues by:
 - taking action, by April 2010, to rectify all health and safety issues identified by the local authority
 - introducing effective systems to identify, support and record the progress of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable in any way.

- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - embedding ambition throughout the school and introducing rigorous procedures for checking on standards and quality for planning for school improvement
 - giving all leaders the training, time and resources they need to drive up the quality of teaching and learning
 - ensuring that governors oversee the work of the school effectively and collect the necessary first-hand evidence to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

Special measures: monitoring of Slater Primary School

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on 15 and 16 November 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, a group of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, teachers and teaching assistants.

Context

The new headteacher and two teachers with leadership responsibility took up their posts in September 2011. Since the last visit one teacher has left and another is absent from school. Their classes are currently being taught by temporary staff. The number of pupils on roll has risen from approximately 90 to 110.

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

Unvalidated assessment results for the cohort of eight pupils that left Year 6 in 2011 shows that attainment remains low in English and mathematics for half of them. In Year 2, pupils made better progress than in previous years so that attainment is closer to national expectations. The majority of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage entered Year 1 with development that is typical for their age, but language skills remain less well developed. This is an improvement on previous years.

The large majority of pupils are now making the expected progress over time, but, because of their low starting points, this is not yet sufficient to close the gap strongly between their attainment and national expectations. This is because the proportion making better progress than this is not large enough. This is particularly the case in mathematics lessons. The reason for this is that teachers continue to find it a challenge to use assessment information to pitch work accurately to meet the needs of all pupils in each group. For example, in one lesson, the teacher had accurately used assessment information to identify a group of pupils of higher ability. The teacher then prepared work that was pitched at the correct level for three of the pupils, but was too easy for three more pupils and too hard for another pupil.

Recent changes to the curriculum and teaching of writing and reading show that in lessons, the quality of learning is much better than on previous monitoring inspections. These changes are too recent to show a greater acceleration in progress over time. The quality of pupils' extended writing is much improved. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, following individual research on the internet, pupils were

writing biographies of Queen Victoria. They were successful because the teacher had ensured that they fully understood the key characteristics of a biography and had planned their work carefully.

School leaders have made the necessary improvements to the quality of teaching for pupils in Year 1. Currently, they are making much better progress than at the time of the last monitoring inspection.

There has been a considerable improvement to the curriculum, teaching and learning in science lessons. Well-structured, exciting and practical lessons during the regular science weeks give pupils good opportunities to develop their skills of investigation, creativity and independence. Pupils reported how much they enjoyed using their own ideas to devise experiments.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making accelerated progress because the curriculum and the additional activities they benefit from are well tailored to meet their needs. This is not always the case for the few pupils that start school with little English. This is because some of the teaching assistants and teachers have not had sufficient training to support these pupils as effectively as they could.

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

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

It was very encouraging to watch the pupils running enthusiastically into school when the gates opened in the morning. Pupils spoken to report how much they enjoy their learning. They are particularly enthusiastic about the considerable increase in the number of school visits they all now embark on. This term attendance is average. This is a considerable improvement on the attendance rate at this time last year. Continued high expectations of behaviour are now normal. This ethos has been embedded successfully over the last two years so that incidences of misbehaviour are extremely rare. Pupils spoken too report that they cannot remember the last incident of bullying in the school.

The effectiveness of provision

Firm foundations are now established that are improving the quality of teaching and learning in English lessons. Lessons are well structured to develop pupils' writing skills. Occasionally however, teachers make unnecessary interruptions when pupils are working independently to make teaching points that are only relevant to a few pupils. This makes it more difficult for pupils to concentrate on finishing their work. Marking and the use of personal targets in English offer more useful guidance to

pupils on the next steps they need to take to achieve their targets. Teachers and pupils were observed referring to them regularly in lessons.

In mathematics lessons, objectives for learning and success criteria are insufficiently precise to ensure that all pupils understand what is expected of them. In addition, there are too few opportunities for pupils to carry out practical activities that would help them to understand difficult ideas such as the equivalence of fractions for older pupils or 'more than' and 'less than' for younger pupils.

The environment for learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues to improve. Children take part in a range of exciting and stimulating activities. Some activities are not yet as well tailored to ensure that children are making the progress that they could. This is particularly the case when all the Reception and Nursery children are in a large group together.

Teachers are now much more able to scrutinise assessment information and identify pupils that would benefit from additional support from teaching assistants within lessons to accelerate their progress. Overall, the curriculum continues to strengthen. Pupils are engaged in a broadening range of interesting and exciting activities that they enjoy.

Induction procedures continue to be secure and welcoming; however, staff realise that more could be done to provide information in their home language to families with little English. Procedures to improve and celebrate attendance are now raising the attendance rate. The procedures to check health and safety and for safeguarding pupils, particularly those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, are now well established and effective.

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

- improve procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils – satisfactory
- strengthen arrangements for securing pupils' welfare and safety issues – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The whole school community and local authority are very pleased at the impact the new headteacher is having on the overall effectiveness of the school. She has made a good start. For example, the recent improvements to the teaching and learning across the school in reading, writing and science have been very effectively led by the headteacher. Teachers are being robustly challenged to develop their professionalism. So, while this is particularly challenging, morale is much higher than it was. Procedures such as the pupil progress meetings are developing so that they are more successful at holding teachers to account for the progress of pupils.

Another important improvement is in the environment for learning. It is bright and attractive and increasingly well-resourced.

The governing body demonstrate that they are now much more successful at overseeing the strategic development of the school. They are well trained, knowledgeable and effective in holding the headteacher to account for the work of the school.

Two new school leaders show a willingness and enthusiasm to improve their leadership skills. Currently they demonstrate that they are not yet as effective in leading their areas of responsibility as they need to be. This means that the headteacher alone has to shoulder the responsibility for nearly all aspects of leadership in the school.

The headteacher and governing body have taken decisive steps to improve teaching, particularly in Year 1. The temporary teaching arrangements are ensuring satisfactory provision for pupils. However, the headteacher and governing body are well aware that staffing instability needs to be overcome to ensure teaching improves at a consistent rate across all classes.

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

- improve leadership, management and governance – good

External support

The school has benefitted from useful support from local authority specialists that have aided the improvement to the curriculum, teaching and learning in reading and writing. Also the effective advice and guidance on the Early Years Foundation Stage have been successful in improving provision.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that teachers make better use of assessment information to pitch work at the correct level for all pupils so that more make good progress, particularly in mathematics lessons.
- Strengthen middle leadership so that the headteacher is able to share the responsibility for leadership.
- Stabilise the teaching team so that improvements in the quality of teaching and learning can be made consistently across the school.