

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk www.ofsted.gov.uk
Serco E tim.ogbourn@serco.com
Direct T 0121 683 3888



25 November 2011

Mrs D Bailey
Headteacher
Rushey Mead Primary School
Gipsy Lane
Leicester
LE4 6RB

Dear Mrs Bailey

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Rushey Mead Primary School

Following my visit with Sue Hall, additional inspector, to your school on 23 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in 15 June 2011. 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.

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Leicester.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2011

- Raise attainment in mathematics and English to be in line with the national average by:
 - improving the quality of teaching so the large majority is good and none is inadequate
 - ensuring that, in all classes, the curriculum is focused on providing opportunities for pupils to develop language skills and a solid understanding of numeracy
 - developing teachers' and support assistants' understanding of early phonics and reading development
 - reorganising the provision for pupils who are in the early stages of learning English so that the support they receive helps them develop their use of the English language sufficiently and within a finite timeframe
 - ensuring that all staff have the appropriate skills to be able to model good quality spoken English
 - carefully tracking individuals and groups of pupils so that underperformance can be tackled quickly.

- Increase the capacity of leaders at all levels by:
 - developing their skills and confidence so that they are able to bring about rapid improvement
 - ensuring leaders collect and use performance information for different groups of pupils so they can pinpoint underachievement and evaluate the success of their actions
 - developing a culture where low expectations are not tolerated.

- Improve the quality of Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving its leadership as a matter of urgency
 - ensuring that activities have a clear learning purpose
 - ensuring staff are usefully engaged in developing good quality spoken English with and by all children
 - ensuring that all staff have the appropriate skills to be able to model good quality spoken English
 - providing regular opportunities for all children to speak in a variety of contexts so that they are confident communicators
 - ensuring that all children are engaged in appropriate social activities.

Special measures: monitoring of Rushey Mead Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 23 November 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, members of staff and groups of pupils.

Context

Since the previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher and an acting Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator have been appointed. Three teachers have left the school. One member of the senior leadership team, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, was away on long-term absence during the inspection visit.

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

Pupils in Year 6 are working at a level in English and mathematics that is well below that expected for their age. They are making more rapid progress in Year 6 than they did in previous years when their progress was inadequate. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is also well below the level expected for their age. They have been set challenging targets which aim, for the large majority of them, to be in line with expectations for their age by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012.

In lessons observed, pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning at Key Stages 1 and 2. Monitoring and tracking systems have been introduced to identify pupils who are not making the expected progress so that intervention and support can be targeted as early as possible. Teachers are at an early stage of development in using these systems.

Pupils enjoy their learning and remain focused on their work, even in lessons that move at a slower pace or are less inspiring. They respond especially well to the increasing use of talk partners and group work during activities which enable them to explain their answers to each other. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, are making similar progress to their peers.

Progress since the last Section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise attainment in mathematics and English to be in line with the national average – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 but inadequate in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A small proportion of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good when there is a clear focus on planning work to take account of pupils' individual starting points and needs, and where there are extensive opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and exchange opinions. Teaching in mathematics is best in those lessons where there have been concerted efforts to focus on the language and numeracy skills required for mathematics. Literacy lessons now provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills. Less effective lessons are characterised by a slow pace of the lesson, inconsistent deployment of additional support staff and pupils of different capabilities engaged in a similar task.

Lesson planning remains underdeveloped in identifying appropriate intended learning outcomes for different groups of learners. The effectiveness of the support provided by additional adults remains highly variable. Too often, additional adults intervene immediately, denying pupils the opportunity to try for themselves or work with other pupils to solve problems jointly. This particularly affects those pupils at the early stage of learning English as an additional language or with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has drawn up new job descriptions for teaching assistants to require fluency in English and a good command of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The quality of assessment remains inconsistent. In some literacy lessons, marking indicates what pupils have achieved and how they could improve but, overall, pupils, including those in Year 6, have insufficient knowledge of how well they are doing and what they need to do to reach the next level of attainment. In mathematics, the best marking gives pupils additional problems to solve or questions in areas that they find difficult but other marking is limited to ticks and brief praise.

The quality of teaching and learning the Early Years Foundation Stage remains inadequate despite some improvements in the appearance of the learning environment and the day-to-day management of provision. Children collaborate well with each other in informal social activities. Staff are deployed more effectively with children and there is now some focus on language development but senior leaders have been unable to appoint a permanent Early Years Foundation Stage leader, although the post was widely advertised. Children are well below expectations for their age across all areas of learning, including communication, when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage and they are still well below when they leave. Support for planning has been given but has had too little impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers' and support assistants' understanding of early phonics and reading development remains very limited. The use of the outdoor area is not effective because it is not linked to any topic or theme. Activities do not have a clear enough learning purpose. There has been insufficient improvement in planning, the curriculum and in leadership.

Progress since the last Section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of Early Years Foundation Stage – inadequate.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher in partnership with the deputy headteacher, has a clear understanding of the priorities ahead. Self-evaluation of the progress made so far is very accurate. Members of the governing body are very knowledgeable and playing a full part in supporting the headteacher in the decisions being taken to bring about improvements. Swift action has been taken bring about changes in teaching staff and there are procedures to ensure that the support staff appointed match the requirements of their new job descriptions. The headteacher is successfully raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve through the setting of challenging targets. Rigorous monitoring procedures have been introduced to evaluate the performance of pupils and the quality of teaching.

Termly pupil progress meetings with each member of staff are now held. Assessment information is analysed rigorously by senior leaders for any trends in performance of different groups of pupils. This information is now shared more widely with staff but the extent to which it is used by teachers to inform planning or monitor groups remains at an early stage of development. There is a programme of regular lesson observations, and senior leaders' judgements of teaching are exceptionally accurate. Training and support have been given to identify individual teachers who are now teaching satisfactory lessons. At present, all of this work is being driven by the senior leaders although middle leaders have been shadowing the headteacher and the deputy headteacher with a view to undertake more of these responsibilities by next term.

Progress since the last Section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- increase the capacity of leaders at all levels – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has been involved in a programme of support for the school in evaluating and suggesting improvements to the school's improvement plan. Middle leaders have received support to develop their skills and confidence, although they are still developing their roles. Support has been provided to the Early Years Foundation Stage acting leader but this has not led to sufficient improvements. The local authority has an accurate view of the progress made by the school to date and the priorities for further improvement. The school has received satisfactory support.

The local authority's statement of action was judged as 'not fit for purpose' because amendments were required in the arrangements made by the authority for informing parents and carers about the actions planned for the school and plans for regularly gathering and taking into account their views. An amended plan was not made available to the inspectors during the inspection visit.

There is no overall coordinator for English as an additional language, although school leaders have arranged for consultancy support to deliver training to all teachers and provide support in developing an induction plan. At this stage, the school remains dependent on external support for its provision.