

PROTECT-INSPECTION



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

Dear Mrs Bailey

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Rushey Mead Primary School

Following my visit with Robert Birtwell, additional inspector, to your school on 14–15 March 2012, 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 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring – good.

Up to two newly qualified teachers may be appointed from September 2012; one in the Foundation Stage and one in Key Stage 1 subject to the school's plans for leadership of this phase and teacher deployment in the same year group. This will be discussed with me before an appointment is made.

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 second monitoring inspection on 14–15 March 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the newly appointed assistant headteacher, members of the of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, members of staff and groups of pupils. The monitoring inspection focused on the improvement issues identified at the last inspection.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the assistant headteacher has stepped down to be part-time special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). As with the first monitoring visit, she was absent during the second monitoring visit although had returned to work in between. A SENCO from a neighbouring school is working with Rushey Mead one day a week to ensure it meets its statutory requirements. A new assistant headteacher has been appointed to lead the Early Years Foundation Stage and will take up her post at the start of the summer term. Since her appointment was confirmed, she has been visiting the school once a week to identify priorities for development and meet staff. Two teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage and seven teaching assistants have left the school. Four new teaching assistants have been appointed. During the second monitoring visit, neither the Chair of the Governing Body nor the School Improvement Adviser were available to meet the inspectors.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school's own data indicates that the proportion of pupils in Year 6 on track to reach the nationally expected level of attainment in English and mathematics the end of the summer term is below average, particularly in English. However the school is well placed to reach the government floor standard of 60% of pupils achieving a Level 4 in English and mathematics. This represents good progress from where the pupils were at the start of Year 6, when standards were well below average. The percentage of pupils expected to make two levels of progress in English and mathematics from Key Stage 1 to 2 is very close to the target set for the school of 85%. The proportion of pupils expected to gain the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 is about in line with the national average in mathematics. It is and below average in English but above the level achieved in English the previous year.

In lessons seen, pupils were making satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. They are well motivated and want to learn, and they respond

enthusiastically, particularly to group tasks and practical activities. Relationships between different groups of pupils and with teachers and other adults are good. Higher attaining pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work to do and therefore not all of them make enough progress in lessons. Lower attaining pupils make similar progress to their peers in lessons because of the effective support they receive as well as through opportunities to work on their own or in groups without adults intervening. Adults are now stepping back more to allow pupils to take more responsibility for their learning, although in some lessons pupils are still sitting on the carpet for too long which slows down their progress. In Year 6, additional intervention from a member of the senior leadership team and an external consultant is allowing pupils to make more rapid progress than in other year groups

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 – good.

The effectiveness of provision

No inadequate teaching was seen during the inspection, which is a significant improvement since the first monitoring visit. Teaching was satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, as was provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of teaching seen that was good was less than the school's target for midway through the year and no outstanding teaching was seen.

In the best lessons, activities move at a brisk pace and pupils move quickly on to their tasks. They take responsibility for their own learning and can assess how they or their peers are doing. Pupils have a clear understanding of the learning objectives for their lessons and all groups are challenged to do as well as they can. Satisfactory teaching is characterised by a generally slower pace that lacks urgency and involves spending too long on whole-class activities before moving to group or independent tasks.

Planning sets out the tasks that different attaining groups will do but not specifically their learning objectives. The needs of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language are not clearly identified in lesson plans. Additional support staff are deployed well and provide effective support that enables pupils to work independently at times. The extent to which the teaching assistants' role is defined in lesson planning varies considerably, however. Although teachers are giving pupils development points and extension questions, these are not consistently followed up in writing by pupils or teachers.

Much of the previously inadequate teaching seen was in the Early Years Foundation Stage but, as a result of staffing changes and improvements to the provision, this has been addressed. Teachers and teaching assistants are demonstrating good

models of spoken English for pupils and working with pupils' home language when it supports their understanding of concepts or enables them to express more complex ideas. Better use is made of the learning areas, although further work is needed on the appearance and to maximise the space available including the outside area. Activities are more structured and for a specific purpose. Procedures for planning and assessment are also priorities for further improvement. At times, pupils spend too long on formal guided activities with too much input from adults. Pupils cannot be sufficiently independent in their choice of activities as some of the resources are out of reach. Displays do not sufficiently reflect pupils' own work or their home languages and cultural heritage.

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

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

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The stepping down of the assistant headteacher from her role has enabled the school to appoint a new assistant headteacher who will take responsibility for leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and provide additional capacity to the senior leadership team. Although this role is not due to start until the summer term, already changes have been made to this provision to ensure that it is at least satisfactory. Much of the credit also goes to the acting leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The headteacher has acted decisively to bring about staffing changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve the provision and remove weaknesses. She has also overseen a significant change in the quality of the teaching assistants through the establishment of criteria which require staff to be qualified in literacy and numeracy and fully fluent in English. All of the new appointments meet these criteria. The governing body has continued to support leaders in the difficult staffing decisions they have made. It continues to challenge the work of the school from a more informed position and has communicated well with parents over the outcomes of the first monitoring visit.

The headteacher has set up a partnership with a locally identified outstanding school in order to increase the proportion of good teaching and move good teaching towards outstanding. It is too early to see the impact of this. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked effectively with middle leaders through coaching, modelling and support to develop their roles so that they are now involved in monitoring teaching accurately and leading pupil progress meetings with individual teachers. They are beginning to develop in their understanding of pupil data to analyse trends in the performance of different pupil groups. Leadership of special educational needs has been constrained by the absence of the coordinator, although

the temporary arrangements ensure that the school meets its statutory requirements. There is no coordinator for English as an additional language or gifted and talented pupils.

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

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

External support

The statement of action from the local authority has been amended to ensure that it is now fit for purpose. The local authority has provided support through the School Improvement Adviser's monitoring visits and teaching and learning consultancy. It has met some of the costs of external support, for example English as an additional language. The number of local authority days committed to the school up to December 2012 is over 200 but, to date, the school has received only a small proportion of these. The interim monitoring visit by the School Improvement Adviser planned for October 2011 did not take place although the most recent one, in February 2012, accurately reflects where the school is now. The external support for the Early Years Foundation Stage leadership did not bring about the required improvements and the changes to date have been initiated by the school itself.