

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566863
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jbennett@cfbt.com



23 November 2012

Mrs Val Eggleton
Headteacher
Riverside Junior School
Holme Street
Hebden Bridge
West Yorkshire
HX7 8EE

Dear Mrs Eggleton

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Riverside Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 21 and 22 November 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 January 2012. 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 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children and Young People's Services for Calderdale.

Yours sincerely

Marguerite Murphy

Her Majesty's Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2012

- Improve the achievement of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs by:
 - developing a range of interventions to support pupils who have additional needs
 - training staff in how to support these pupils in small group intervention work and when working with them on a one-to-one basis
 - providing effective support for those pupils who arrive at the school with rudimentary reading skills
 - carefully tracking the progress of pupils and intervening promptly whenever any underachievement is detected
 - improving the quality of record keeping and target-setting so that staff are clear what the pupils need to achieve and how best to support them in class.

- Improve achievement in writing by:
 - ensuring there is sufficient challenge for pupils of all abilities
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write extended texts.

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching across the school by:
 - improving the quality of feedback to pupils so they are clear about what they need to do to improve their work
 - reducing the amount of time teachers spend giving long explanations at the expense of pupils working independently
 - ensuring teachers use assessment data effectively to plan work that matches pupils' abilities
 - sharing more widely the good practice that currently exists in the school.

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels drive and sustain improvements by:
 - monitoring the progress of groups of pupils over time and taking prompt action to prevent any underachievement
 - empowering staff to use assessment data effectively to challenge pupils and ensure they receive the support they need
 - refining the current system of meetings with teachers so that there is a rigorous system of holding them to account for the progress of pupils in their classes.



Special measures: monitoring of Riverside Junior School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 21 and 22 November 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team, teaching assistants, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Seven teachers were observed in seven lessons. The majority of observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or the National Leader in Education (NLE).

Context

Since the first monitoring inspection in May 2012, the governing body completed the process of recruiting a deputy headteacher, who took up the position in September 2012. One teaching assistant has taken up the newly created post of Learning Mentor and two new teaching assistants have been appointed on temporary contracts.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 in summer 2012 confirmed that pupils' standards of attainment remain above average in both English and mathematics. The results were higher than in the previous year, especially in the proportion of pupils exceeding nationally expected levels in reading and mathematics. Improvement was also evident in the higher number of pupils now reaching above average standards in writing, which is beginning to catch up with reading. This more positively reflects their above average starting points on entry to Riverside school. Similarly, the achievement of pupils who have additional learning needs is improving because of the school's better provision for those pupils. The clearer systems and procedures in place, including the leadership of special educational needs, are beginning to make a positive difference to their rates of progress. Observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work during this monitoring inspection confirm that further improvements are becoming evident in the quality of learning for all groups of pupils in most lessons. There is variability, however, in pupils' progress over time in some year groups and the school is aware of the need to remedy any remaining areas of underperformance.

The school is placing a stronger emphasis on the importance of grammar, punctuation and spelling in pupils' writing. Consequently, pupils are more aware of this and are starting to pay more attention to 'getting it right', although the quality of their handwriting and presentation is still too variable. Most pupils enjoy writing and expressing their ideas creatively, and this continues to be encouraged in order to motivate them to improve further. Reading record books and learning logs are enjoyed by pupils and used regularly. These provide a useful link between home and school to enhance communication about the work that pupils do and how families can help.



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

- Improve the achievement of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs – satisfactory
- Improve achievement in writing – satisfactory

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving steadily, although there is still inconsistency, even between individual teachers' performance at various points. The school is aware of the need to sustain and develop further the improvements already made. That said, the proportion of good teaching is rising, confirmed by the inspector in joint observations with school leaders during this monitoring inspection. Teachers' skills and confidence are growing and they are ably supported by an increasingly effective and well-deployed team of teaching assistants. A positive learning environment and good relationships between adults and pupils are common features of lessons across the school.

Teachers are paying closer attention to planning lessons that take into account the needs of different groups of learners, although their intentions are not always successfully met in practice. This is due to some continuing issues with the school's policy and teachers' skills in assessment – the way in which they check exactly what it is that pupils already know and can do. Consequently, teachers sometimes find it difficult to build securely on this by planning the right activities to move each pupil's learning on quickly enough. The quality and usefulness of teachers' marking and verbal feedback to pupils are inconsistent. When it is most effective, pupils receive detailed feedback on their work and clear targets for improvement that relate to what they are expected to have learned. Where it is less successful, pupils are not sure about their specific targets or how to work towards these and know when they have been achieved.

Pupils are enjoying the increasing opportunities to work independently or as part of a team, as teachers are more aware of how to balance the time they spend on introductions and explanation. Improvements in the quality of teaching and classroom management are having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils with additional learning needs are also being supported and challenged in a more balanced way by teachers and teaching assistants so that they are making better progress.

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

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching across the school – satisfactory

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is demonstrating its commitment to improving pupils' behaviour to be consistently good or better through a range of measures. A 'behaviour for learning' policy



has recently been shared with parents and the principles of this are applied by staff; this is evident in the improvements to teaching and classroom management, so that pupils have a better understanding of acceptable boundaries and higher expectations of behaviour. The work of the learning mentor makes a valuable contribution to these improvements and to fostering positive links with parents. Pupils work and play happily together on most occasions and show respect, for example, through teamwork and listening to each other and to adults who work with them.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher is now able to share some senior leadership responsibilities with the recently appointed deputy headteacher and this is helping to develop the school's capacity to sustain improvements. The leadership team welcomes the expertise and support of the school's effectiveness officer and the NLE. This contributes to the increasing rigour and accuracy of the school's monitoring to check on its improving performance. Leaders and governors have a better awareness of how to identify and tackle areas of weakness. They know that the school's performance management systems need to be fully updated and linked to the expectations of the national standards for teachers.

The management of the school's provision for and responsibility towards pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly in recent months. This has been due to a number of factors including the professional development of leaders, teaching and support staff and utilising the expertise of staff from the NLE support school, Ashlands Primary. The partnership between the special educational needs coordinator and learning mentor is providing an extra layer of communication for the support of pupils with additional learning or behaviour needs. Key subject leaders check teachers' planning and pupils' work; they are also members of the school's leadership team that meets regularly. There is more work to do to ensure they have a strategic overview of their subjects across the school and are able to influence and improve the quality of teaching and learning directly.

Almost all members of the school's governing body attended a training day at the start of term to develop and share their vision for the school. They have an improving understanding of the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, in order to raise appropriate questions and hold leaders to account. A restructuring of some governor roles and committee meetings has taken place and puts a high priority on the leadership and development of teaching and learning. The governing body is represented on the board of the newly formed Calder Valley cluster, where funding allocation bids are considered for schools across the area.

There is a growing sense of teamwork among staff as the emerging improvements in leadership, teaching and pupils' behaviour are having a positive impact on the school's ethos and pupils' outcomes.



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

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels drive and sustain improvements – satisfactory

External support

Despite the local authority's recent restructuring and changes to resourcing arrangements, there is an ongoing commitment to funding the services of the National Leaders in Education programme. Appropriate checks are made on the school's progress and the local authority has a good knowledge of the school's needs.

