

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus T 0300 123 1231  
Queensway Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
Birmingham enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
B4 6AT [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Direct T: 0121 679 9161  
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com



1 March 2013

Miss Stephanie Peters  
Headteacher  
Harlescott Junior School  
Featherbed Lane  
Shrewsbury  
SY1 4QN

Dear Miss Peters

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Harlescott Junior School**

Following my visit with Michael Onyon, Additional Inspector, to your school on 27–28 February 2013, 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 September 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 inspection – good.

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 Shropshire.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker  
**Her Majesty’s Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2011**

- Improve the quality of teaching as a matter of urgency in order to raise levels of attainment to at least the national average by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - making better use of information from assessments to set tasks that pupils of all abilities find suitably challenging
  - ensuring that the curriculum for individual pupils builds progressively on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
  
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are effective in driving forward improvements by:
  - using assessment and tracking information to identify weaknesses in teaching, particularly in those classes and subjects where pupils make the slowest progress
  - using the results of such checks to set more precise and challenging priorities for improvement
  - implementing plans to address these priorities and accurately evaluating their effectiveness in driving improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Harlescott Junior School**

### **Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 27–28 February 2013**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, parents, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Fourteen lessons were observed jointly with the senior leadership team.

#### **Context**

There have been no changes since the previous monitoring visit.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

In 2012, attainment at the end of Year 6 in English was in line with the national average. Attainment in mathematics was in line with the national average. In comparison with similar groups, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was above average in all subjects, as was the attainment of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school's monitoring information indicates that, currently, all year groups are making accelerated progress. This view was confirmed by inspectors' judgements of the quality of learning evident in the lessons observed and in pupils' workbooks. Thus pupils' progress since the last visit by HMI has improved and the school has narrowed the attainment gap with national averages.

The school's baseline tests in Year 3 indicate that, on entry to the school, some pupils' understanding of number bonds and multiplication tables is insecure. Pupils observed in Year 3 lessons are working with greater confidence with number bonds and have a better understanding of their multiplication tables. They take fewer steps in their number lines to accurately answer addition and subtraction questions and can work in tens, twenties and fifties.

Pupils in Year 6 tackle more complex mathematical problems than was previously the case. Those pupils tackling Level 6 work are growing in confidence. They are applying their understanding of mathematical processes to a range of written problems and they explain their answers to each other.

Guided reading is better organised. As a result, pupils are encouraged to read challenging texts where they apply their understanding of phonics to read new words and use dictionaries to find out the meanings of unfamiliar words. Reading logs show that pupils are reading a wider range of books and more frequently.

More opportunities are provided for all pupils to write at length. In Year 3, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are able to organise their writing well using a basic grammatical structure. This is also reflected in their topic books. In Year 6, pupils are able to extend their vocabulary and use a greater range of punctuation in different writing styles. Throughout the school, presentation and handwriting is much improved. Pupils spell with greater accuracy and apply their knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) with increased confidence. Pupils are encouraged to review their own and others' work and to suggest improvements.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is improving. Teachers' planning has improved so that it takes more account of what pupils already know. Teachers are setting more accurate targets for pupils and have appropriately higher expectations of what pupils can do with the right help. All teachers use the school's tracking information to identify those pupils who need extra support. Teachers use good questions to probe pupils' understanding. They adapt the learning during the lesson so that misconceptions are swiftly addressed.

Teachers are more confidently using a greater range of teaching approaches. Good choices of resources promote learning well. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils used bundles of straws in tens to match fractions to their equivalent percentage and decimal values. Marking and written feedback to pupils are improving because teachers are following the school's marking policy more consistently. However, incorrect spellings in topic books are not always followed up in the same way as they are in literacy work.

Teachers more regularly seek pupils' views on what they are learning and they adapt their teaching accordingly. As a result, pupils are better engaged in their work. Homework is better organised and quick feedback on pupils' work is provided through using information and communication technology. Also, a wider selection of e-reading books is available for pupils' own reading, which enables them to read more frequently and widely.

Teaching assistants ask better questions which more accurately establish pupils' understanding. However, at times, they do not give pupils long enough to answer questions, nor do they prompt pupils sufficiently to provide full and clear answers. Nevertheless, teachers and teaching assistants are now better at identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, and intervening to help close them.

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

- improve the quality of teaching as a matter of urgency in order to raise levels of attainment to at least the national average – good.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are now more actively involved in their learning. Pupils collaborate well in pairs and groups, and so improve their ideas through discussion. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Parents and pupils alike agree that bullying rarely occurs and is dealt with swiftly. Pupils are punctual to lessons and attendance is not a concern.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Middle managers have improved their monitoring. They plan and evaluate the quarterly raising attainment plans. These plans are sharply focused on improving pupils' progress. Subject coordinators and phase leaders regularly engage in a range of monitoring activities. These include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' workbooks, and talking to pupils about their learning. Findings from monitoring activities are discussed in staff meetings and inform staff training. Thus, the school is more effectively identifying and sharing its good practice.

The recent staff training on using pupil progress information and the school's tracking data have helped teachers to make more effective interventions to increase the rate of pupils' learning.

The governing body is clearly focused on improving its effectiveness. All governors have had training on the school's tracking system and the link governor role. Consequently, link governors more frequently monitor the teaching and learning in classrooms and meet regularly with subject coordinators. The governing body minutes better reflect the challenge made to senior leaders. All sub-committees regularly write an 'impact statement' about their work and these are reported to the full governing body. Thus governors, in part, base their challenge of senior leaders on independent evidence and hold well-informed expectations of improvements in school performance.

The school has developed its creative curriculum. There are greater opportunities for cross-curricular work and pupils are consulted about what they would like to study as a topic. Pupils are enthusiastic about and enjoy topic work. In mathematics lessons, pupils have more opportunities for problem solving within practical everyday contexts. However, opportunities are missed to develop numeracy skills in other subjects.

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

- ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are effective in driving forward improvements – good.

## **External support**

The local authority continues to challenge the school. It has appropriately scaled down the level of support provided because the school has grown in capacity to manage its own improvement agenda. The school is an active member of local school networks which are enabling it to keep abreast of new initiatives and incorporate best practice observed in partner schools.