

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9160
Direct email: antony.grace@serco.com



8 March 2013

Stephen Wood
Headteacher
Clifford Road Primary School
Clifford Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP4 1PJ

Dear Mr Wood

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Clifford Road Primary School

Following my visit with Cecelia Davies, Additional Inspector, to your school on 6–7 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed in any key stage.

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 Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

George Derby
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and ensure that all pupils make at least the expected progress in English by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - improving pupils' skills in constructing sentences, punctuation and spelling
 - ensuring all teachers have similarly high expectations of the presentation of work and developing a whole-school approach to the teaching of handwriting and correct letter formation
 - increasing the opportunities for writing at length in English and across the curriculum.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that teaching is consistently good or better and eliminate inadequate teaching by:
 - ensuring that assessments are accurate and used effectively to plan work that challenges and matches closely the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils
 - developing a whole-school approach to planning lessons, and ensuring plans include clear learning objectives and are consistent across year groups
 - developing and implementing a whole-school marking policy, ensuring that target setting and marking procedures consistently give pupils a clear understanding of their next steps for learning
 - rigorously monitoring and evaluating pupils' work and the quality of teaching across the school, putting the emphasis on pupils' learning, and increasing teachers' accountability for the progress made by pupils.

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels by:
 - reviewing and revising the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team so that it is more effective in driving school improvements
 - developing a rigorous approach to assessing attainment in reading and writing so that data used for tracking pupils' progress are reliable and accurate
 - developing the role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, and holding leaders to account.

Special measures: monitoring of Clifford Road Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 6–7 March 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including 13 lessons. They looked carefully at school documents and met with the headteacher, senior staff, groups of pupils and two governors. They also spoke to representatives from the local authority.

Context

A permanent member of staff has replaced a Year 3 class teacher who resigned at the end of December 2012. The class has been taught by a number of different teachers during the past year. Another teacher, also in Year 3, is due to leave at the end of this term. Temporary staff have covered some absences due to illness in Year 1 this term. A member of staff has also been appointed on a year's contract.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school has worked tirelessly to improve pupils' attitudes to writing and their skills. There are considerable opportunities for pupils to write in subjects such as science, geography, history and information and communication technology. Pupils use their sounds, letters and spelling skills systematically across a range of different types of writing. They are guided well by the criteria they have to meet when producing a piece of work, and the preciseness of these is helping to accelerate progress.

The school's concerted efforts are now paying dividends and pupils' attainment and progress in writing have improved well in most classes. Although there is still a little variation across the school, especially in Years 1, 3 and 4, boys are well motivated and work diligently when undertaking activities which involve writing at length.

Pupils take great pride in their work and practise their handwriting regularly. They form their letters well and the high-quality displays and the work in their books show that their good handwriting is consistent across the school. Most staff also model writing well. However, some teachers' marking, although thorough, diagnostic and helpful, is not easy to read.

The school's rigorous checks on how pupils are doing mean that those not on track to make the progress they should are identified quickly and given support, such as through extra tuition. The school's high level of support for staff also means that any new teacher who needs help teaching letter sounds or systematic spelling get this very quickly and the pupils' progress is not interrupted.

The progress of more-able pupils is improving through greater attention to what they need to do and learn, especially in Year 6. However, in other parts of the school, more-able pupils do not always develop their thinking, problem-solving, and investigative skills sufficiently.

The good progress across all areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially through the increased opportunities to learn letter sounds in Nursery, is being built upon well in Reception and Years 1 and 2. This also means that pupils in Key Stage 1 are beginning to make good progress in writing.

Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are currently on track to reach broadly average standards by the end of the school year in reading, writing and mathematics from starting points on school entry which are typical for the age. There is an increasing proportion of pupils making better than expected progress across the school.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress across the school. This is because the support for them in lessons has improved and staff are careful to explain things to them and ask searching questions to check on their understanding. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make progress similar to most pupils overall, although, in a few groups, such as Year 6, they make better progress.

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

- raise attainment and ensure that all pupils make at least the expected progress in English – good.

The quality of teaching

A greater proportion of teaching is now good or outstanding. The school's updated and challenging target of 80% good or better teaching is now within its sights. A small amount of teaching still requires improvement and, on very rare occasions, there is some weak teaching. Leaders' approach to checking on the quality of teaching is tenacious but is also highly supportive. Teachers are provided with excellent feedback from senior staff, in particular, and practical advice on how to improve.

For nearly all teachers, their planning has improved well. There is no longer a focus on completion of activities; teachers now concentrate on how well pupils are learning. This has improved the progress that pupils make because what they need to do to succeed is better understood by staff and pupils.

Teaching is now more lively and activities more engaging. Most teachers generate an enthusiasm, passion and enjoyment for learning which increases pupils' interest and motivation. Questioning is more probing and makes pupils think hard and extend their learning.

Work is well matched to pupils' abilities and interests in most cases, and excellently so in Year 6. This is because staff make good use of the school's comprehensive information about pupils' progress. While all teachers plan to extend the learning of more-able pupils, some miss the opportunity to stretch these pupils, especially their thinking, problem-solving or investigative skills.

Teachers take every opportunity to incorporate reading and writing activities in lessons. Occasionally, though, these do not lend themselves to what the teacher wants to achieve, such as asking pupils to write in paragraphs using software that requires short, sharp bullet points.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning so that teaching is consistently good or better and eliminate inadequate teaching – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are keen to learn and they behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is close to the national average. It has been considerably affected by a sickness virus this term.

Pupils are respectful of other pupils and adults alike. They know how to improve their work and their attitudes to reading and writing are positive. They enjoy the school's approach to help them to become better learners through the Building Learning Power project and how they can build 'learning muscles' to help them, for instance, to persevere.

Case studies show the considerable impact of the school's work on improving pupils' social skills and their emotional resilience. This is largely through the work of the Family Liaison Officer, and shows an increasing response from families in supporting their child's education.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Despite there being only a short time since the last monitoring visit, the school has gone from strength to strength.

The senior leadership team is more cohesive and much more effective. Communication and teamwork are strong. Phase leaders keep a very close eye on

the progress made by pupils and immediately address any issues arising from their observations of teaching and learning. They use the school's comprehensive and accurate data from the half-termly assessments to rigorously check how well pupils are doing. Leaders tackle their work more independently and no longer wait for senior leaders to tell them what to do.

The actions and timelines in the school's current improvement plan have mostly been adhered to rigorously. Only where there has been staff illness has planned monitoring been unable to take place. As a next step, senior staff are to develop the school's plan further. This is to include broader areas of the school's work and is because leaders have increased confidence in their ability to accurately evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Greater accountability for the provision and progress made by pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs has led to improved support and better monitoring of the work of teaching assistants. The leader has a much better understanding of pupils' progress, the impact of direct support and the work such pupils undertake in lessons. There is an appropriate plan for improvement and the leader is due to undertake training to gain the national award. The systems for the formal appraisal of the work of teaching assistants, though, are still at an early stage of development.

Governors check more closely on the gains that pupils make and their visits show that they challenge leaders to account for this. There is better understanding of the gains that should be expected, and probing questioning about pupils' progress.

The school's feedback on how parents view the school's improvement is positive. Although there are only a very small number of returns through Ofsted's Parent View, those parents who responded feel their children are happy. A few have negative views; for instance, a few think their children do not feel safe. Inspectors found the school's safeguarding procedures are rigorously applied.

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

- improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels – good.

External support

The local authority continues to give valuable support but is providing more opportunities for the leaders to make decisions and develop plans independently. This is bearing fruit and is increasing leaders' confidence in their ability to decide the next steps. The Local Leader of Education continues to provide hands-on, practical support to improve teaching further in Key Stage 1. Staff benefit greatly from this.