

Serco Inspections
20 Colmore Circus
Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9163
Direct email: lewis.mackie1@serco.com



11 July 2013

Mr Andrew Ridout
Headteacher
Tower View Primary School
Vancouver Drive
Winhill
Burton-on-Trent
DE15 0EZ

Dear Mr Ridout

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Tower View Primary School

Following my visit with Mary Maybank, Additional Inspector, to your school on 9–10 July 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 be appointed, with no restrictions.

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 Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and ensure that all groups make at least satisfactory progress by:
 - analysing the progress made by different groups and ensuring teachers use the results to match tasks accurately to pupils' abilities and interests
 - providing additional support for groups where necessary, especially those known to be eligible for free school meals
 - drawing up curriculum plans for all subjects and year groups so that teachers are able to plan work that builds progressively on previous learning
 - providing teachers and teaching assistants with training appropriate to their needs.

- Improve the school's leadership and management by:
 - establishing a stable senior leadership team with the skills necessary to drive the school forward
 - implementing rigorous and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation procedures
 - using the results of such procedures to identify key areas for improvement and implementing suitable plans to address them
 - taking steps to raise staff morale and improve the confidence of parents and carers in the school
 - securing a governing body equipped with the skills necessary to fulfil its responsibilities and meet all statutory requirements with respect to the curriculum, information for parents and carers, and equality of opportunity.

Special measures: monitoring of Tower View Primary School

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on 9–10 July 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' work and met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Telephone calls were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the executive headteacher and a representative of the local authority. Four lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders, and inspectors met with two groups of pupils. Parents attending sports day were spoken with.

Context

There have been no important contextual changes since the last monitoring inspection.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school received the results of the 2013 tests taken by Year 6 pupils during the inspection. Early analysis shows that the trend of improvement evident in previous monitoring visits has been translated into better test scores this summer. Attainment in reading is now just above average, and in mathematics it is average. Pupils scored below average in writing, however. Their spelling was weaker than their punctuation and grammar, and they underperformed on questions requiring them to write complex sentences.

Regular assessments made each term by the school show that all year groups are now making at least the progress expected nationally. Year 1 pupils have made much better than expected progress because of the consistently strong teaching they have received. Year 6 pupils have made outstanding progress over the last year in mathematics and good progress in reading and writing. However, given how far behind where they should have been at the start of the year, this was only enough for them to reach the national averages in reading and mathematics.

The vast majority of pupils supported by the pupil premium (pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from a family with a parent in the armed forces) make good progress too. The gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing rapidly in reading and mathematics, and on average they are just a few weeks behind other pupils in these subjects. In writing, they are about half a term behind.

Assessments carried out when children join the Early Years Foundation Stage show that almost all have skills and experience that are below national expectations for their age. Good teaching, and particularly the high-quality planning and assessment

and use of the imaginative outdoor role-playing area, enables them to make good progress. Consequently, by the time they join Year 1, the large majority of children have reached age-related expectations.

The quality of teaching

Most teaching observed during this inspection was good. The lessons seen were well planned and the work given to pupils generally challenged the range of abilities in the class at an appropriate level. Teaching assistants were used well to support learning. Teachers generally made good use of questions to assess learning and prompt pupils to think harder, but did not always expect detailed enough responses from them.

Pupils' books show that marking is particularly good in Year 6. Teachers' comments usually start with the phrase 'To improve...' and go on to point out precisely what it is that pupils need to do next. It is clear from their work that pupils do respond to this advice. Marking of Year 4 and Year 5 books is inconsistent, however. Pupils do not get enough guidance on how to improve their work, which limits their progress. Sometimes teachers of these classes praise pupils for incorrect work. For example, one pupil writing a formal letter had made incorrect use of paragraphs and begun his sentences with phrases which were inappropriate for this style of writing. In marking this work the teacher had commented 'fabulous – well done'. The teacher did not point out the mistakes made, or set out the correct approach that should have been adopted.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and ensure that all groups make at least satisfactory progress – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and attitudes to learning seen during this visit were good. Pupils say incidents of misbehaviour and interruptions to learning are much less frequent than they used to be. There is some name-calling, which sometimes includes offensive words and racist terms of abuse. Pupils say adults take effective action to put a stop to abusive behaviour when told about it. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's expectations for behaviour, and how the rewards and sanctions policies are applied. They appreciate in particular the individual and class rewards for good attendance. Attendance is now above average.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher and senior leaders accurately diagnose strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Training is provided to tackle the weaknesses identified, and it is followed up with regular monitoring to check improvements are being

made. For instance, following training on the school's expectations for good lesson planning, subsequent monitoring showed that almost all plans included a range of tasks of at three levels of difficulty and the role of the teaching assistant in the lesson was clearly detailed.

The curriculum is being adapted as the school moves from some mixed-age classes to having entirely single-age classes next year. Planning for reading and mathematics meets pupils' needs well, and this accounts for the good progress they are now making in these subjects. On the other hand, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in literacy lessons, or to apply their literacy skills when working in other subjects. Pupils' books show that in some classes they do not practise writing in different styles in sufficient depth.

The governors have not yet had a chance to discuss the 2013 test results. However, at the last governing body meeting they reviewed the latest school assessments and the predictions for the test outcomes, and identified that achievement in writing was a relative weakness. The headteacher was asked to produce an action plan to swiftly improve pupils' writing. This shows that the governors are effective in challenging the headteacher and holding senior leaders to account for the performance of the school. They make important spending decisions, such as using pupil premium funding to improve the Early Years Foundation Stage outside area and introducing single-age classes. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and are instrumental in driving improvement.

Parents recognise how much the school has improved in the last two years. One told inspectors that they are 'absolutely thrilled with the progress of the school since the headteacher was appointed' and another said, 'My daughter's teacher is amazing. Problems with another child were sorted out immediately.' Parents say communication with them has much improved with the introduction of the weekly newsletter. The parents' forum enables them to make suggestions, which they say are acted upon.

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

- improve the school's leadership and management – good.

External support

The local authority is reducing the extent of support it and the executive headteacher provide, as the school is demonstrating the capacity to improve further by itself. The executive headteacher has kept a watchful eye on the school and offered advice about, for example, providing more opportunities for pupils to engage in extended writing. The local authority adviser arranges a meeting each term to formally review the quality of teaching and the school's performance data.