

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566 857  
**Direct F** 01695 729 320  
**Direct email:** jkinsman@cftb.com



5 December 2013

Mr Jonathan Nichols  
Acting Headteacher  
Heygreen Community Primary School  
Taunton Street  
Wavertree  
Liverpool  
Merseyside  
L15 4ND

Dear Mr Nichols

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Heygreen Community Primary School**

Following my visit with Chris Griffin, additional inspector, to your school on 3 and 4 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2013. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Liverpool.

Yours sincerely,

Lezek Iwaskow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

**The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2013.**

### Area for improvement 1

Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is at least good in all year groups by:

- ensuring that pupils know their targets and how to achieve them, are clear about what is expected of them and understand how to tackle tasks so that they can complete them successfully without relying too heavily on support from adults
- ensuring that the work given to pupils matches their varying needs and abilities and is not too easy or too difficult
- improving marking so that pupils are always given good written guidance about how they can improve their work, especially their writing.

### Area for improvement 2

Rapidly raise **pupils' attainment, especially that of boys, in their reading and writing**, so that it is at least in line with national expectations and pupils make good or better progress by:

- ensuring that reading and writing skills are taught systematically as pupils move through the school
- making sure that the work provided and the resources used in phonics (the sounds that letters make) and guided reading lessons, precisely match pupils' varying knowledge and skills
- improving pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting
- providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in subjects other than English.

### Area for improvement 3

Urgently improve **the impact of leadership, management and governance** so that the school's performance improves rapidly by:

- taking swift action to eliminate inadequate teaching and to improve the remainder
- ensuring that there is a clear, whole-school focus on raising attainment in reading and writing
- ensuring that senior leaders responsible for leading subjects are given the time and opportunity to be fully involved in checking that the quality of teaching is at least good, that all pupils are making at least good progress and that, as leaders, they are leading improvement in their subjects, especially in English
- making sure that all teachers are held accountable for the progress pupils make
- ensuring that governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and the impact of strategies aimed at raising pupils' achievement as well as closing the wide gaps in the performance of different groups, especially that of the boys
- undertaking an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

#### **Area for improvement 4**

Continue to **improve attendance** by finding effective ways to support those pupils who are frequently absent and their families, so that the pupils attend school more regularly.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 December 2013**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, members of the senior management team, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and the school improvement partner (SIP). In addition, discussions were held with groups of pupils, parents and a representative from the local authority. Lessons were observed in every year group in the school as well as several other teaching sessions. Learning walks, accompanied by the executive headteacher, observed phonics (the teaching of letters and the sounds they make) and guided reading sessions. Several of the lesson observations were joint observations with the executive headteacher. Pupils were also heard reading and a selection of books was scrutinised to determine how well pupils were learning over time and how they were developing their writing in the context of other subjects.

### **Context**

There continues to be a high level of staff turbulence. The substantive headteacher, who has been absent from school since June 2013 is no longer working at the school. The headteacher, from a nearby successful school, continues to lead both schools as an executive headteacher. An experienced teacher, from the partner school, has been seconded to provide stability for the critically important Year 6 class. Two recent appointments are no longer employed by the school and at the moment, two posts are filled on a temporary basis. Two new teachers have been appointed and are due to start in January. This will hopefully resolve the remaining staffing issues. An Interim Executive Board was appointed with effect from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 to replace the Governing Body.

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

Achievement is improving but progress is patchy and has been hampered by on-going staff instability. Data indicate that, across Key Stage 2, children's achievement lags behind national expectations by at least a term. This reflects a legacy of a lack of consistently good teaching over a number of years and is evident in the volatility of reading and writing scores. Writing is stronger in Year 6, reading is better in Year 4 and especially in Year 3. However, this varies from year to year. The executive headteacher has tackled these issues by ensuring that teaching and assessment are focused more firmly on progress. There is emerging evidence to show that in some classes pupils are making more accelerated progress, notably in Year 6. However, this is still not evident across all years and in all subjects. Overall, those pupils supported by additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (pupil premium) make better progress

than their classmates do. The latest SAT results do paint quite a positive picture, with attainment and progress improving significantly from previous years and these were at, or above, national expectations. Pupils made especially good progress in writing. In contrast, at Key Stage 1, outcomes were below national averages, especially in the phonics screening test. Progress and attainment across the school remain too inconsistent, are generally below nationally expected levels and remain a concern, particularly in those classes which have suffered with a high turnover of teachers. Recovery remains fragile. The school, however, has a clearer and more accurate picture of the progress pupils are making due to a revision of the assessment and recording systems. Previous data analysis has provided an unrealistic picture of the progress pupils were making. Literacy skills remain a concern with spelling, punctuation and grammar being particularly weak, especially among the boys. The picture in the Early Years Foundation Stage is slightly more positive. Despite entering with below average skills, children reach a good level of achievement. However, improved assessment and pupil mobility raises some concerns about the security of the gains being made, not only in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but elsewhere in the school.

### **The quality of teaching**

Although teaching has improved, pockets of inadequate practice remain, particularly in those classes where there have been frequent changes of teacher. The school has reacted positively to the advice offered to improve the teaching of phonics and reading, two aspects which were heavily criticised during the inspection in March. Pupils are now taught phonics in ability-related groups and this has enabled more focused and appropriate work to be provided. However, groups remain large because insufficient support staff have had the training to enable them to take groups independently. Also, not all staff are confident in discussing and applying letters and sounds or explaining the function of words. As a result, the outcomes for pupils are not yet consistently good. Equally the teaching of guided reading is patchy. Effective teaching of reading was observed, particularly in upper Key Stage 2 where pupils were familiar with processes and could work independently. Elsewhere, they often struggled to maintain concentration when asked to work independently. Training is being rolled out through the school but is not yet complete. As a result, weaker practice was still observed.

There are clear pockets of improving practice. The Early Years Foundation Stage was well-organised and effective with frequent evidence of adults interacting well with children as they played, explored and were creative. This area is well-resourced and continuous provision is well-organised. Experienced teachers in Year 2 and Year 6 were providing high quality learning opportunities with appropriate and challenging tasks being set, good questioning and engagement with pupils which elicited higher level responses and work. Pupils responded and worked hard. However, teaching was not this consistently good across the whole school. Where teaching requires improvement, teachers' management of learning still needs further development and

training. Teachers do not fully model or explain to pupils what it is they expect them to do. As a result, pupils did not always complete the work to a sufficiently high standard. In weaker lessons, pupils, especially boys, often interrupt and shout out questions which distract the teacher. This is not necessarily malicious and is at times genuinely inquisitive. Nevertheless, it breaks the continuity of the lesson, resulting in other pupils losing concentration. As a result, less work is actually covered and less learning takes place. Pupils identified that, although conduct has improved, too many lessons are still disrupted by some poor behaviour. Teaching is still 'work in progress' with the new round of filmed observations supporting the coaching and development of teachers, particularly those who may be new to the school or relatively inexperienced. On-going staffing turbulence has also continued to hamper progress.

The quality of marking and feedback to pupils is also improving, but still varies in quality. In some classes, pupils are secure in what they have to do to improve, but in others they are more vague. Marking is more developmental in English books, but is not always of the same quality in other subjects where teachers may have less secure subject knowledge.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

General behaviour around the school is improving. This was acknowledged by pupils and parents. A positive approach to behaviour management is having an impact and is gaining respect from pupils. Pupils spoke positively about 'reflection' on poor behaviour as having a greater impact than the method of detention which had been employed previously. Several pupils felt that detention as a deterrent had been counterproductive and that some pupils saw it as an opportunity to get out of formal lessons. They also spoke positively about how the classrooms have been re-organised so that pupils sit in small mixed-ability groups which enable them to work collaboratively to help and support each other. This is certainly helping to narrow the attainment gap. The school is aware that more needs to be done to stretch the more-able and specific strategies, such as sending more-able pupils for additional tuition in mathematics in the partner school, are being explored.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning in the classroom still need to be improved and this is clearly linked to the quality of teaching. In those classes where teaching is weak, pupils are easily distracted and can disrupt lessons through silly, rather than bad, behaviour. In these lessons, less work is done and pupils sometimes 'switch off' and daydream. Fidgety behaviour is prevalent in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 classes, where there has been some of the greatest turnover of staff or weakest teaching in the past.

Attendance is improving but still remains below the national average. The number of pupils with persistent absence has been significantly reduced. Pupils explained that they enjoy coming to still because 'lessons are getting better'. They appreciate the

changes being made and, on the whole, are responding positively. Statutory safeguarding requirements are in place and are secure.

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

The executive headteacher has stabilized the school. Inconsistencies remain but there is a sense of moving forward. Neither governors, nor the executive headteacher, nor the local authority have shirked from making difficult decisions about staffing and this, in part, has contributed to the staff turbulence. However, there is a determination not to accept second best if this school is to achieve its potential. There is a clear vision, V=G2G (Vision=Getting to Good), which is visibly displayed around the school and is shared by both staff and pupils. There is a greater communal feeling that the school is moving forward, but also an understanding that it is a long and winding road. Progress is being made. Parents and pupils were unanimous in identifying that the school is changing for the better. The statement 'the school has improved a lot. It is nice to see the children enjoying school now' was a typical comment.

Basic, but essential, systems to help the school function effectively are being put in place. Monitoring of teaching is not only more rigorous but is also more developmental. Sessions are filmed and provide the basis for discussion. Assessment is more accurate and more finely tuned. Subjects are taught discretely allowing teachers to focus more effectively on knowledge and understanding. Evidence from scrutiny of work shows that, although practice is not yet consistent across the school, it is beginning to support the teaching of writing much more effectively. Pupils are positive about this change. The leadership of subjects, however, remains at an embryonic stage and has also been hampered by the volatility of staffing.

Aspirations are being raised. For example, a small number of pupils from Year 6 regularly visit their partner school to receive tuition in mathematics to enable them to sit for higher SATs papers. The pupils and parents commented about the increase in amount of homework that is now regularly provided, not just in English and mathematics, but across a range of subjects. A staff handbook outlines clear policies and procedures to ensure common approaches, for example, to the teaching of aspects of English such as handwriting or reading. This ensures greater consistency across the school, supports less experienced staff and avoids confusing pupils. Support for those pupils with disabilities or special needs is also being re-evaluated and re-structured in discussion with the local authority and external agencies to ensure that the current weak provision is improved. Communication with parents is getting better. Parents talked positively about the phonics, mathematics and blogging workshops which the school has provided to enable them to support their children and engage with their work. The school blog celebrates and shares the work pupils are doing on a day-to-day basis.



The members of the Interim Executive Board meet regularly and provide strong governance for the school. Their focus has, to date, been primarily to support the executive headteacher in the management of the many staffing issues. They are currently providing greater challenge, focusing primarily on the current inconsistent outcomes across the school. They are realistic about the school's effectiveness and acknowledge its deficiencies. The culture of the school is changing for the better. There are successes which can be celebrated, but school managers and the local authority acknowledge that more still needs to be done if the school is to achieve its full potential.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide good support to the school. The secondment of the executive headteacher was brokered from a nearby successful school. In addition, an experienced teacher has been seconded from the same school to teach in Year 6, where there was an immediate need for stability and good quality teaching. Positive relationships have been established with this partner school and good use is being made of the full range of expertise available. In addition, consultant support has been provided and remains available. Time is provided from the Assigned Senior School Improvement officer, who is also the School Improvement Partner. Regular meetings, involving the Principal Primary School Improvement officer, are used to monitor progress and identify additional needs. A Local Authority Review was carried out earlier this term. This identified the progress being made in some areas, but also raised concerns about the lack of consistency across the school exacerbated by continuing staffing turbulence. The findings were used to review and refine several improvement processes. An Interim Executive Board was established and the local authority recommended appropriate high calibre members who were given access to appropriate induction support. The on-going relationship between the school and the local authority is positive and beneficial.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- As a matter of urgency, staffing needs to be stabilised to prevent further delays in driving through improvements.
- Management needs to make sure that teachers and support staff receive appropriate training to enable them to provide good teaching of phonics and reading as well as effective intervention support for those pupils identified as needing it.