

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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

Direct T 0117 3115307
Direct email: rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com



23 January 2014

Mrs Carel Buxton
Executive Headteacher
Snaresbrook Primary School
Meadow Walk
South Woodford
London
E18 2EN

Dear Mrs Buxton

Special measures monitoring inspection of Snaresbrook Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21-22 January 2014 with Georgina Beasley, additional inspector, 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 June 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 can appoint newly qualified teachers.

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Redbridge.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve teaching and make sure none is inadequate by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan tasks at the right level of difficulty to challenge pupils of different abilities, especially the more able
 - pupils spend enough time learning actively
 - teachers' questioning is probing and extends learning fully
 - teaching assistants are directed more effectively to assist learning throughout the whole lesson and teachers always take action to stop and prevent silly behaviour in lessons.
- Provide better feedback to pupils by:
 - making sure pupils understand what it is that they are aiming for and how to reach the next level in their learning
 - ensuring that pupils' work is marked in a way that helps them to know how to improve it, and that pupils are given time to respond to these comments.
- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics and in English, especially writing, by:
 - improving the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and the use of home-school reading records
 - providing better opportunities to interest boys in writing, making sure pupils write for different purposes in a range of subjects, and ensuring mathematics lessons focus closely on the skills pupils need to learn.
- Prevent individuals or groups of pupils from falling behind, by:
 - gathering accurate information about pupils' starting points when they join the school, and tracking their progress much more carefully through the school
 - using records of pupils' progress to identify pupils and groups of pupils who are underachieving, and taking prompt action, where needed, to help them make good progress
 - making sure leaders use the pupil premium funding more effectively
 - rigorously checking attendance and improving it for poor attenders.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - improvement plans focus sharply on what needs to be achieved, contain targets that are more challenging, that actions are fully implemented and the impact closely monitored
 - leaders check the curriculum thoroughly to ensure sufficient depth of coverage for each subject
 - leaders ensure the needs and interests of all groups of pupils are met, especially boys, those who are more able and those for whom the school receives additional funding
 - managers responsible for subjects or other aspects of the school are fully involved in driving improvement
 - leaders and managers accurately assess the quality of teaching and take steps to ensure that teaching is good or better, holding teachers to account for pupils' progress
 - governors hold the school fully to account for the standard of education provided, and that they are equipped to do this well
 - an external review of governance is carried out to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 21–22 January 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, middle leaders, learning assistants, two groups of pupils, a group of parents and carers, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Associate Adviser from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, four teachers have moved on from the Nursery, and Years 1, 3 and 4. Permanent and experienced teachers have taken over the teaching of these classes. At the time of the visit, two specialist and experienced teachers from the outstanding partner school were transferred to the school to take over the teaching of the second Reception class. The Department for Education's proposal for the school to become an academy is no longer under consideration. The governing body is therefore at the very early stage of considering the future of the school and the recruitment of a permanent headteacher.

The executive headteacher retains responsibility for the strategic management of the school and spends half of her time there. In her absence, the associate headteacher, with the support of the assistant headteacher, oversees the day-to-day management of the school. The number of pupils on roll is stable.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils enjoy learning; typically, they are engaged and absorbed with their class work. Their desire to learn leads to the majority making good progress over time.

While standards remained above average in 2013 in Year 2, there was a significant improvement in Year 6. Standards attained by the cohort were above average and were the best results for the last three years. Most pupils reached the standard expected with a minority exceeding expectations. Achievement was stronger in reading and mathematics than in writing. When the starting points of pupils are taken into consideration, progress was good overall. Nevertheless, this masks the slower progress of some groups of pupils. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium were at least six months behind their peers in reading and mathematics. Whereas the progress of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and those supported at school action made progress similar to the national average and the average for their group nationally, the few supported at school action plus made significantly slower progress. Boys made slightly slower progress than girls. The progress made by most pupils from minority ethnic groups was similar to the

national average. Although the vast majority of the most-able pupils reached Level 5, too few managed to attain the highest Level 6 in mathematics, reading and writing. Children's achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening test was in line with the national average. More emphasis has therefore been placed on teaching phonics, which has improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children learn their phonics well in small groups while in Reception, with many confidently using the knowledge to read and write simple words and sentences.

Although the 2013 results placed the school in top 10% of the best-performing primary schools in the borough, senior leaders have even higher expectations. They have acted quickly by introducing a range of actions to increase equality of provision that will lead to better outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. For example, the school recognises that pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding are unlikely to achieve as well as their peers unless support is sharper and more targeted. There is also recognition that the quality of writing and phonic skills requires further improvement. Consequently, there is an increasingly sharper use of assessment information so that work is better matched to pupils' needs. Other changes include: new resources to improve the teaching of phonics; carefully selected reading resources to motivate boys to enjoy reading and writing more; placing more emphasis on pupils writing for a range of purposes; and developing cross-curricular links to improve literacy and numeracy skills. Plans to support the most able are also being considered.

The good progress made in the 2013 national tests is being sustained, primarily as expectations of work and pupils' keenness to learn are leading to them making better progress. The school's internal and validated assessment information shows that results are expected to rise further. However, the challenge for the school is at two levels. First, to ensure that information on pupils' progress is used accurately. The second is for leaders to develop and sustain good-quality teaching over time in order to accelerate pupils' progress further.

The quality of teaching

Much has been done to improve teaching and identify the impact on pupils' progress. For instance, the Teachers' Standards have been used to provide clarity about expectations; teachers have observed good practice; monitoring of teaching is now linked to performance management; and discussions about teachers' accountability are now a regular feature of the school's work. The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils is very well linked to other notable factors: book scrutiny, teachers' efficiency and planning, classroom environment and teachers' expectations of lessons. Consequently, teachers are in no doubt that quality-first teaching is paramount, and overall, the quality is improving with an increasing proportion that is good.

Teaching assistants are well deployed to support learning and behaviour in lessons. Disabled pupils and those with specific additional needs are particularly well supported to enable them to engage with similar learning and take part in the same activities as their classmates.

Good lessons are characterised by teachers using their expertise to plan interesting activities that stimulate pupils' interest; work is well matched to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils; there is a good volume of challenging work; and lessons get off to a brisk start. In such lessons, pupils are suitably challenged; they grapple with complex ideas and apply the taught skills, as seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils used persuasive writing techniques to structure their letter without the constant supervision of the class teacher.

Although much reduced, some teaching still requires improvement. There are aspects of some of the above features, but expectations are not high enough and the lesson content lacks depth. Skills are not always consolidated or applied accurately; time is not used efficiently; pace is not fast; there is imprecise use of language; and challenge is intermittent. Occasionally, teaching is inadequate because planning is disorganised and there is little awareness of how to develop the main activities well. Despite these factors, it is not unusual that pupils still make some progress because their zest for learning is not dampened by disjointed teaching.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour has improved since the last full inspection. In lessons and around the school, it is good and occasionally exemplary. Although a small number of boys tend to lose focus briefly, on the whole, very little silly behaviour was seen in lessons. Pupils have a good appetite for learning; they are industrious and concentrate well on their work. As a result of activities being more carefully matched to the learning needs of different abilities, pupils feel they are challenged more. Nonetheless, the most-able pupils wish to have harder work, particularly those who have reached the highest level available for their year group.

Relationships between pupils are good. Pupils work well together to support and share ideas and check each other's work. Selected ambassadors are diligent about their roles and responsibilities, and act as role models preventing misbehaviour, including bullying. Attendance has improved and is higher than at this time last year. The school now has robust systems for monitoring attendance of different groups and takes immediate action if this dips or a pupil that the school is concerned about is absent.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The pace of improvement has been quick under the leadership and management of the executive headteacher. This has been possible because she is ably assisted by the other senior leaders. Together, they have clarified the vision for school improvement and are working with middle leaders and other staff to implement and develop the action plan.

Senior leaders have put new and good systems in place. Staffing has been re-structured, job descriptions have been written, which is a first for some post-holders; statutory policies are now in place; and procedures for assessing pupils and monitoring teachers' performance are in place. These have increased accountability at all levels for pupils' progress and, as a result, staff are more aware about expectations of their work. For example, the middle leaders are more surefooted and are using the links with the outstanding partner school to understand how to develop into their roles. This joint partnership work, organised leadership training for some, and advisory support from the local authority have increased their confidence. They reported that staff are now approaching them to seek their advice and support. The middle leaders are, however, mostly new to their roles, particularly to the new way of working. Nevertheless, emerging evidence shows that they know the strengths and weaknesses, and are taking appropriate actions. For instance, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has speedily analysed and used progress data to identify weaknesses. This has led to the planning of relevant activities to improve the weaknesses identified in the children's speaking, reading, writing and mathematics skills. Similarly, a robust system is in place to track the progress of pupils identified as vulnerable, to ensure that all can have equal access to support to close the attainment gap.

Senior leaders are ensuring that teachers provide meaningful experiences for pupils that will have a positive impact on their learning and achievement. The rigorous approach to monitoring teaching and pupils' work over time has led to a few teachers being moved on quickly. The tracking system has created a greater sense of ownership amongst teachers; they are now clear that they are responsible for accelerating pupils' progress. Meetings with all staff to consider pupils' progress has increased accountability and there is no slack in the drive for improvement. Parents and carers who met with the inspectors commented on the 'culture of change in the last six months'. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress and the subjects they are taught; they are now shown how they can support the school to drive improvement. Parents and carers want the school to sustain the recent improvement but remain anxious about the future, as the current leadership arrangement is short-term.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and challenge issues around staffing and the performance of pupils. The recent attachment of governors to year groups and subjects is helping them to know more

about performance and hold all leaders to account for improvements. Governors are drawing on their expertise to analyse performance information and ensure that issues around equality are fully addressed.

External support

The local authority is very supportive of the school's approach to accelerating improvement in a short time. Consequently, the local authority's exit plan of support is being mapped out as the school moves forward at a quick pace. Senior officers continue to hold the management of the school accountable for all improvements through monthly meetings. Whole-school review of teaching and learning, the regular advice from the Associate Adviser, and the support from the human resources department are contributing to the leaders knowing how to get on with the main task of developing teaching and learning. Furthermore, training and specialist support from subject advisers and consultants are enabling middle leaders to develop their roles and responsibilities as middle leaders. Middle leaders and teaching assistants reported that that support from the outstanding partner school is of good quality and has increased their understanding of supporting and working with pupils.