

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 311 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

27 February 2014

Mrs C Wapshare
Headteacher
Beechview School
Guinions Road
High Wycombe
HP13 7NT

Dear Mrs Wapshare

Special measures monitoring inspection of Beechview School

Following my visit to your school on 25-26 February 2014, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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.

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 Interim School Improvement Manager, Buckinghamshire Learning Trust and the Director of Children's Services Buckinghamshire County Council.

Yours sincerely
Daniel Towl

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Accelerate pupils' achievement by improving the quality of teaching in all classes by:
 - raising teachers' and other adults' expectations of what pupils can achieve through planning work that is sufficiently challenging and well matched to the needs of all groups of pupils
 - ensuring teachers make more regular and accurate assessments of pupils' learning and use the information to plan lessons which help all pupils reach higher levels of attainment and make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - introducing consistent ways for teachers to assess pupils' progress during lessons and to use this information to modify activities and tasks accordingly
 - ensuring that teachers do not talk for too long in lessons so that pupils can work more quickly at tasks by themselves and complete more work in their books.
- Improve the behaviour and safety of pupils by:
 - ensuring that the work interests the pupils, and that they are actively involved and concentrate well
 - improving the way pupils' behaviour is managed so that disruptions are not tolerated and pupils know they should use adult support to resolve any bullying issues
 - improving provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
 - ensuring that the playground is more orderly and offers a secure place to play.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring leaders urgently increase the pace of improvements with robust plans and clear, measurable targets which are checked frequently for their impact on pupils' achievements
 - making sure leaders with specific responsibilities identify the correct areas to improve, plan actions and check on their impact in order to improve pupils' learning in their subjects
 - implementing a thorough programme for checking the quality of teaching and learning, including scrutinising planning, observing lessons, talking to pupils and reviewing their work ensuring that teachers' assessments and the school's data give a regular and accurate view of how well pupils are doing
 - improving systems for managing the performance of staff so teachers meet the expected professional standards and are held to account for how well pupils achieve - taking steps to eliminate all inadequate teaching and providing any necessary training ensuring pupils' challenging targets are met because teachers

know what pupils need to do to

- improving the approach to teaching reading so pupils are more enthused to read and have better skills which they can use in all other areas of their learning.

Improve the effectiveness of governance through ensuring the governors:

- gain a better understanding of the performance of pupils and require leaders to halt the declining pattern of pupils' underachievement provide a relentless challenge to school leaders in holding them to account for improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the behaviour of pupils in lessons check the impact of their decisions about the spending of the pupil premium funding more carefully.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 25-26 February 2014

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, parents and carers, the consultant headteacher, the interim school improvement manager of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust Wycombe, the school's improvement adviser and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, the acting headteacher has been appointed to the post of substantive headteacher and a new special needs coordinator has joined the staff. The school does not yet have all its substantive teaching posts filled.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' achievements are improving, though there is still a way to go before all pupils have caught up and overcome the effects of their previous slow progress. More pupils are beginning to make the progress that is expected of them, though attainment overall remains low.

The school's more detailed analysis of pupils' progress indicates that more pupils in Year 6 are starting to reach the levels that they should. Some pupils are likely to be entered for the higher Level 6 in the national tests this summer.

Pupils' progress in reading continues to show improvement. A focus on developing pupils' writing skills is also starting to show promise in raising pupils' achievements. Pupils' mathematical skills are not yet developing fast enough across the school. Mathematics has not received the same level of attention as English.

A very focused approach in Year 5 and Year 6 to support, in a more coherent way, those pupils who need extra help to catch up is proving successful. There are examples of pupils making good and rapid progress resulting from this specific support. Gaps in achievement between those pupils receiving additional support through the pupil premium funding and other pupils in the school are starting to close.

The quality of teaching

Although continuing to improve, the quality of teaching is still too variable across the school. The positive atmosphere in classrooms remains an important feature in helping to raise standards. This is because teachers have high expectations of behaviour, which is now a well-established part of the culture within the school.

There is now some good practice where teachers are checking pupils' understanding during a lesson more carefully, including asking pupils for explanations in order for them to clarify what they are learning. In Year 3, for example, a pupil gave an accurate explanation, to the whole class, about how to use coordinates to find a country in an atlas.

There are still times in some lessons where teachers do not match work effectively to pupils' differing abilities, and this means that they are unable to engage properly with the tasks and do not make enough progress. Teachers' explanations or instructions are not always precise enough to make the purpose and nature of tasks 'crystal clear'.

Where the teaching is best, pupils are able to explain clearly what they are doing and learning about. One pupil in Year 6 explained, for example, very clearly to the inspector her good and thorough understanding of the properties of angles in a triangle. This demonstrated good learning resulting from good teaching.

Teachers have very detailed information about the progress of pupils. Increasingly, this is being used effectively to help to focus teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils. This is more evident in Year 5 and Year 6 where teaching is stronger. The support for pupils who are falling behind in their learning is now much better organised. Teaching assistants, support in lessons and one-to-one or small-group sessions away from the classroom are proving successful. This more focused teaching is helping pupils to make more rapid progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

A small group of randomly chosen parents and carers in discussion with the inspector felt that behaviour was well managed at the school. They were aware of the various sanctions and procedures that are now well embedded in the day-to-day life of the school. Good behaviour is the norm. Of those parents and carers who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire up to November 2013, all felt that their children felt safe at school. There are now more positive responses, than previously, about behaviour and the management of bullying.

Pupils' attitudes towards school and their learning are positive, and they show respect for each other and staff in class. Behaviour in assembly is excellent. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are showing appropriate maturity by working independently on tasks. Attendance has improved since the last monitoring inspection because the headteacher is taking rigorous, though supportive, action, with families where pupils have low attendance.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leadership and management have been strengthened and this is the area where there has been the most improvement since the last monitoring inspection. There is greater clarity in the roles of school leaders, the interim executive board and external partners. The new bursar has quickly established financial clarity regarding the school's budget, and this has helped both the headteacher and interim executive board to plan more efficiently. Improvements in the management capacity of the school have enabled the headteacher to begin to take a more strategic view in planning the next stages of improvement, while still checking on how quickly day-to-day standards in all aspects of the school's work are getting better.

Leaders with subject responsibility in English and mathematics have developed their skills and are starting to check more rigorously how well these subjects are being taught, and how well pupils are doing. They are beginning to work alongside colleagues and give specific support where this is necessary. Developing writing skills in English and undertaking some detailed assessment of pupils' core skills in mathematics are activities that have helped drive up pupils' achievements. A successful link with an outstanding school has acted as a catalyst for these leaders, and further links with this partnership are planned.

The appointment of a new special needs coordinator has had a very positive impact on the way in which additional support for pupils is organised and managed. She has carried out a very thorough analysis of pupils who need extra help. With this information, a more rigorous and detailed plan has been put in place of all the extra support that is provided and how it will be organised. Careful attention has been given to the needs of pupils in Years 5 and 6, many of whom need to make more rapid progress, and there is now a developing analysis of the needs of pupils in Years 3 and 4.

Lesson observations by the headteacher and external consultants are now a regular feature of the school's monitoring activities. There is a better link made between the work in pupils' books, assessment information and the quality of teaching observed in lessons. However, when weaknesses are identified, targets for improvement are not always suitably specific or checked soon enough.

The interim executive board has increased its effectiveness and efficiency. It is aware that it needs to appoint more members to increase the range of skills and experience on the board. The Chair is ensuring that there is a more detailed analysis of the impact of its work. The board is now challenging the headteacher more rigorously about the school's performance and in particular pupils' progress. Planned training about school performance data, liaison with parents and carers, and establishing governance roles for special needs and the use of pupil premium funding indicate the growing involvement of the board. It is successfully supporting the overall management of the school on a number of issues concerning personnel

matters and is continuing to liaise with the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust on the future of the school regarding academy status.

External support

The role of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust is clearer. It is keeping a close eye on the school's progress through its 'Focus Group' meetings and established a more rigorous support programme recently involving: moderation of the school's assessments of pupils' work, individual support for teachers, lesson observations and subject-specific support. It is seeking to involve the school in authority-wide improvement projects. The Trust is now expecting a more rigorous analysis of the impact of the work undertaken. At present, not all the written reports from consultants' work are leading to sharp, clear and time- constrained areas and targets for improvement in order to accelerate change. The work of the consultant headteacher has helped to develop the management and leadership skills of the headteacher and subject leaders. This means that the leadership of the school has improved its capacity to 'stand on its own'.