

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 01216 799164
Direct email: tim.ogbourn@serco.com



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Mrs Linda Hatcher
Acting Headteacher
Rose Hill Primary School
Derby Road
Ipswich
IP3 8DL

Dear Mrs Hatcher

Special measures monitoring inspection of Rose Hill Primary School

Following my visit with Samantha Stewart, Additional Inspector, to your school on 4–5 June 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk Local Authority.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - lessons interest pupils and engage them in their learning
 - teachers make the best use of teaching time and learning moves at a brisk pace
 - teachers use challenging questions to extend pupils' understanding and strengthen their knowledge.

- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that progress is at least good in all year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - teachers having high expectations of handwriting and the presentation of work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects
 - ensuring that teachers provide work which matches pupils' abilities so that it is neither too hard nor too easy.

- Improve communications with parents and carers so that they are fully informed about all aspects of school life.

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders and managers are more sharply focused on improving pupils' attainment and progress
 - linking the judgements made on the quality of teaching with the progress pupils make in lessons
 - further developing governing body actions so that they rigorously hold leaders to account through additional training in monitoring and evaluation of pupils' data linked to the main issues in the school development plan.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 4–5 June 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, governors, pupils, members of the temporary senior leadership team and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and four teachers have left the school. In April, the deputy headteacher was appointed to the post of acting headteacher. Three new leaders have been recruited for September. Five of the classes are taught by teachers on supply or temporary contracts while the school recruits replacements planned to start in September 2014.

Achievement of pupils at the school

From their starting points, the majority of pupils are making the expected progress, both at Key Stage 1 and 2. However, this is uneven from one class to another depending on the quality of the teaching. In a number of classes, it is too slow. This is the case in both Key Stages 1 and 2 and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Progress is accelerating in reading. This is because of improvements to the teaching of phonics and the impact of a reading scheme that has enthused most pupils to read regularly at home and at school. When writing, pupils have more opportunities to write at length and the quality of their work is strengthening.

Weaknesses in achievement in mathematics remain. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to problem-solving activities and investigations, and their misunderstandings are not addressed well enough. As a result, they do not make enough progress.

More-able pupils or those in ability groups who find the work easy are not stretched enough to make more rapid progress. Often their work is too easy. For example, in a mathematics lesson, they demonstrated at the start that they understood the work and would not be learning anything new, but still had to complete the tasks set.

Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make better progress than others because of the extra targeted activities that they benefit from.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching remains too variable from class to class. However, given the many recent staffing changes experienced in the school, the acting headteacher and

the governing body have successfully ensured that, at this challenging time, the quality of teaching has strengthened in some aspects. A set of 'non-negotiable' agreements to strengthen teaching are now established and all teachers are complying with them. This has strengthened lesson planning and marking, improved the pitch of work to pupils of different abilities and ensured that the presentation of work is better than at the time of the previous inspection.

Weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics have yet to be overcome. In some classes, it is evident that teachers do not have sufficient understanding of the subject and how best to teach it.

The most improved marking is in writing. Teachers are giving pupils advice on the next steps that they should take to improve their work. In some classes, there is an expectation that pupils respond to this advice. This is not the case in all classes, where pupils do not get the chance to consolidate their learning. In mathematics, marking is weak. Often the advice given is incorrect and misconceptions are not addressed. The result is that pupils move on to new topics without a good enough understanding of what it is they have just been taught.

Teachers now group pupils in class by ability and prepare work designed to meet their needs. This is not yet precise enough to ensure that all abilities make sufficient progress. One reason for this is that teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils' completed work when planning the next lesson. At the start, when the teacher is introducing the lesson, there are missed opportunities to stretch and challenge the most-able pupils. This is because the teachers give a general introduction that is not specific to the work that each group will be expected to complete. Teaching assistants are underused during this part of the lesson and, in some cases, spend their time listening to the teacher without any specific tasks to complete.

There are examples of effective teaching in the school. In the Year 5 and 6 class and the Year 3 class, pupils benefit from helpful advice on how to improve their work and, generally, lessons are well pitched to cater for the abilities of most of them. There are also examples of some teaching assistants doing an effective job. For example, when teaching phonics, supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or when taking a lead teaching the class.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

One notable achievement is the improvement to behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons. In all lessons visited during the inspection, pupils tried hard to complete their work and listened attentively to the teacher. Punctuality has improved. The reason for this is that arrangements at the start of the day have been changed by the acting headteacher. This has encouraged the pupils who were occasionally late to arrive on time.

Pupils enjoy coming to this school and demonstrate loyalty to it. One example of this is 'The Rose Hill Rag'. A group of pupils have used their initiative to produce a newspaper that celebrates the good aspects of the education that they receive within the school.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The acting headteacher has successfully risen to the challenge of leading the school since the previous headteacher left. This has been a very difficult task, in particular because of the many changes in staff since the last monitoring visit. She has been successful in leading improvements to the teaching of reading and writing. She has ensured that all teachers comply with the non-negotiable expectations of teaching and has strengthened the behaviour of pupils in lessons. The steps she has taken to improve communication with parents are bearing fruit, and those spoken to demonstrate an increasing confidence in her leadership of the school.

Most of the leadership at other levels is ineffective. This has been recognised by governors, and appointments have been made to strengthen leadership in September. At this time, it is unclear what the impact of this will be. One exception to the weak leadership at other levels is the leadership of special educational needs, which is effective and has strengthened the provision and progress of pupils.

The performance management of leaders, teachers and teaching assistants has been very poor in the past. The acting headteacher is strengthening these procedures now and fully appreciates that targets for staff from September need to be precise so that all fully understand their responsibility to contribute to school improvement.

Governors demonstrate that they better understand their role and are becoming increasingly effective. They have had to make and act on some difficult staffing decisions to strengthen the leadership of the school. They have yet to take full responsibility for the strategic development for the school. For example, they are not clear enough about the developing partnership with a local high-performing school. They feel that others, such as the local authority, should make it clearer to them the parameters of the arrangement. However, they have demonstrated that they now have the ability to take a strategic lead and should take the initiative themselves to work with outside agencies to establish the purpose and parameters of these sorts of arrangements.

External support

The school has benefited from a useful review by the local authority in March that identified precisely the next steps that the school needed to take. Regular visits from the local adviser are also helpful in reinforcing these messages. The school also benefits from visits by local authority subject advisers. Sometimes, the notes of visit

which they leave with the school on where improvements need to be made are not specific enough. This means that they are not as helpful to the acting headteacher.

The school is developing a partnership with a local school. To date, this has yet to have an impact, but one positive step is that the partner school is seconding a deputy headteacher to the school starting the week after this monitoring inspection.