

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0121 679 9153  
**Direct email:** [naik.sandhu@serco.com](mailto:naik.sandhu@serco.com)



3 July 2014

Deborah Bailey  
Executive Headteacher  
John Bunyan Junior School  
Lancaster Way  
Braintree  
CM7 5UL

Dear Mrs Bailey

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of John Bunyan Junior School**

Following my visit with Samantha Stewart, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 1–2 July 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 17–18 September 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 toward 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 Essex.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2013**

- Strengthen teaching so that pupils make good progress by ensuring that:
  - every teacher has high expectations of each pupil and uses methods that hold their attention
  - assessment data are used more effectively to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils, including the more able and those who have special educational needs
  - teaching assistants are deployed so they contribute to learning throughout each lesson
  - individual targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics, and that these are frequently reviewed and used to plan the next steps in learning
  - teachers give pupils clear points on how to improve when they mark their work and check that these have been adopted.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - introducing more rigorous procedures for evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' performance and developing a coordinated approach to improving teaching
  - managing the performance of all staff more rigorously by setting individual targets for teachers which are tightly linked to pupils' progress
  - sharpening self-evaluation so that it provides a frequent and accurate analysis of performance
  - ensuring that improvement plans include challenging targets that are about raising pupils' achievement
  - undertaking an external review of the role of the governing body, to ensure that governors do more to challenge senior leaders over the school's performance.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 1–2 July 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed all of the classes. Four of the observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher or the deputy headteacher. The inspectors met with senior leaders, including governors, members of the strategic board and leaders of mathematics, English and special educational needs. Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons and in two meetings. They talked informally to some parents. Meetings were held with teachers and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors scrutinised documents, monitoring records and school improvement plans.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the associate headteacher has ceased working with the school. One teacher has left the school and been replaced. Several leaders from the linked infant school are supporting teaching and leadership. The school is in the process of consultation about the closure of this school in September 2015; there are plans to extend the age range of the infant school to incorporate Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

Attainment in reading and mathematics has improved. The school's assessments indicate that the proportion of Year 6 pupils on track to attain Level 4 has improved significantly and will this year be closer to the national average. Many more pupils have made expected progress in reading and mathematics in relation to their starting points at the school. There is a bright picture for Year 4 and Year 5 pupils, where teacher assessment and moderation by the local authority indicate that pupils are on track to continue this upward trend in attainment. Year 3 pupils, however, are not building well enough on their skills to achieve good progress across the year. A Year 2 teacher from the infant school will work in Year 3 from September 2014 to aid better transition from the infant school. Work to agree and build on assessments from Key Stage 1 is underway.

Attainment in writing has not improved. Boys' progress in writing lags behind that of the girls. Not enough is done to promote better writing for boys. Gaps in attainment for pupils eligible for pupils premium funding are not closing. Pupils are able to write for a range of purposes in a range of genres because they have more opportunities to do so. However, grammar, spelling and punctuation skills remain as significant weaknesses in pupils' writing. Although they have opportunities to learn and practise these skills, pupils do not consistently apply this learning in their writing pieces.

Too few pupils attain the higher Level 5 in reading, writing or mathematics, and the work for the most-able pupils is frequently not challenging enough. Emerging strengths in providing challenging tasks for the most-able pupils, seen at the previous monitoring inspection, have not been consolidated as the school has focused on raising attainment at Level 4.

Improved leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has ensured that the progress of these pupils is carefully tracked and additional support is now evaluated for its impact. A programme to support better progress in mathematics for groups of pupils is proving effective. Pupils are making progress; however, the school is clear in the understanding that this must be accelerated to ensure that pupils are on track to reach their goals in all subjects.

A new scheme to encourage reading is having a positive impact. It is instrumental in engaging reluctant readers. Pupils are happy to talk about their books and how the scheme works. A few more-able readers feel that it is restrictive and they would like the opportunity to choose books more freely. Nevertheless, there is a growing culture of reading and pupils can name their favourite authors. Not enough is done, however, to teach reading skills to the least-able pupils, including to develop some pupils' skills in phonics (the sounds that letters represent).

Handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work are improving in some classes and for some pupils, but not consistently. Too often, handwriting and presentation are untidy and make the work difficult to read.

### **The quality of teaching**

Elements of teaching have improved. Teachers typically provide work for the different levels of attainment within their classes now. However, this work is not precise enough to meet the specific learning needs of some groups of pupils consistently. Too often, work for most-able pupils are too easy for them. Sometimes, they complete their tasks quickly and progress slows when they wait for further challenges. In other lessons too, the brightest pupils have to wait too long before they can get on with work that builds on their existing skills.

The teaching of mathematics has improved. Many pupils have good opportunities to apply their growing knowledge of number to more-complex problems and investigations. Teachers provide more practical resources to help the less-able pupils learn number facts and the processes of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. These pupils have fewer opportunities to apply their skills in the problem-solving and investigative work that other pupils attempt. This limits their ability to consolidate the skills they have learned.

Pupils read more frequently in school because of the introduction of the new reading scheme but there is no clear strategy to teach basic reading skills to emerging

readers. Teachers are not trained to deliver effective phonics teaching to those who need it.

All teachers follow the school's marking policy consistently. Pupils understand the green and pink marking, which indicates what they have done well and what needs to improve. Some teachers provide helpful 'next step' comments to further challenge pupils, but this is not always the case. All pupils have targets now, linked to their levels of attainment. Pupils usually know what they need to do to achieve the next level. However, teachers seldom refer to pupils' targets in lessons or in their marking comments. These missed opportunities limit the effectiveness of targets to improve pupils' progress.

Teachers help pupils write for a variety of purposes but the teaching of spelling rules, grammar and punctuation is not effective. Lessons do not focus sufficiently on developing these skills. Sometimes, pupils are not clear enough about which elements of writing they need to focus on. The school does not have a clearly understood strategy to improve writing.

Teaching assistants frequently provide helpful support, particularly for groups of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the less-able pupils. Where questioning is skilled and teaching assistants provide encouraging direction, these pupils make good progress. This skilled teaching is not replicated in all classes, however. When teaching assistants are not clear enough about the purpose for learning or their role in achieving this, their work with small groups is not effective.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

All agree that behaviour has improved and disruption to lessons is rare. Although pupils' attitudes to learning are improving, pupils become disengaged and lack concentration when they spend too long passively listening to their teachers or when the work is not stimulating their interest. The urgency to get on with tasks is often lacking in lessons.

Pupils have a good understand of different forms of bullying. Pupils say that some name-calling takes place and that the word 'gay' is sometimes used in an unkind way. They are confident that teachers and leaders address poor behaviour and bullying robustly. Consequently, pupils feel safe in school. The school has introduced a 'worry box'. Teachers swiftly address pupils' concerns and worries.

Procedures to address absence are effective, particularly in reducing the number of pupils who have consistently poor attendance. Attendance overall has improved but is not yet average.

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

The executive headteacher is determined to make a difference at John Bunyan Junior School. She is focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and has led some improvements in this area.

Leaders from the linked infant school support junior school leaders. The infant leader of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has been effective in working with the deputy headteacher to monitor progress and assess the impact of additional support. The new leadership of mathematics oversees improvements in the teaching of mathematics and has a clear strategy to further improve teaching and achievement. The same clarity of vision is not evident in the leadership of English or in action plans to improve matters in this subject. The school's approach to tackling low attainment in writing or to improving the teaching of reading is not clear.

All teachers have targets to improve their teaching and they are encouraged to reflect on the impact of their teaching by contributing on a weekly basis to a professional log. The local authority representative conducts lesson observations and the executive headteacher regularly drops in to lessons to monitor teachers' progress in achieving their targets. The regular feedback teachers receive is helpful but it does not feed into performance management procedures well enough. Consequently, the management of staff performance is not rigorous.

The narrow curriculum seen at the time of the previous monitoring inspection continues, particularly for some pupils who have additional mathematics and English lessons in the afternoons. The executive headteacher has plans to address this and broaden the range of subjects all pupils study.

Governance has been strengthened through the work of the school improvement board, which comprises governors from the infant and junior school. The board monitors and challenges the school well. The external review of governance recommended at the section 5 inspection in September 2013 has yet to take place. Procedures to vet staff before their appointment to the school to ensure that they are safe to work with children meet requirements.

The school is on a journey to closure and the extension of the infant school to accommodate junior-aged pupils. Currently, some roles and responsibilities are not clear enough. More needs to be done to ensure that this journey is a smooth one and that it does not hinder or distract from continued and swift progress to the removal of special measures.

### **External support**

The local authority has brokered the executive headteacher and the additional leadership capacity her school provides. It monitors the work of the school. Support

from a National Leader of Education and the Teaching Schools Alliance have been helpful in improving leadership and elements of teaching.