

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lincs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

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

Direct T 01695 566850
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: dmccarrick@cfbt.com



4 July 2014

Mrs Julia Gallagher
Principal
Epworth Primary Academy
Birchfield Road
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN9 1DL

Dear Mrs Gallagher

Special measures monitoring inspection of Epworth Primary Academy

Following my visit with Rosemary Eaton, Additional Inspector to your academy on 2 and 3 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 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 academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may 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 Isle Education Trust Board and the Director of Children's Services for North Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Angela Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve teaching so all is at least good so that all pupils, including lower-attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those supported through the pupil premium, make at least good progress, by:
 - making sure teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - making sure that teachers' provide practical and interesting activities that appeal to all pupils, but especially the lower-attaining boys in order that they remain interested and involved
 - providing pupils who need additional help with their learning with the right and timely support they need to make good progress in every class
 - supporting teachers to assess pupils' achievements accurately and use information about what pupils know already to plan work for them that is at the right level
 - making sure that teachers' marking identifies clearly what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve their work, and that pupils are given the time to respond to this marking so that improvements can be made.

- Raise the attainment of all pupils in reading so that a greater proportion reach and exceed the nationally expected levels, by:
 - ensuring that pupils who have weak basic skills have the support they need to catch up quickly
 - making sure that pupils improve their spelling, particularly in Key Stage 2
 - ensuring that all pupils, but particularly the lower-attaining, read more regularly.

- Ensure that senior leaders and governors make urgent and rapid improvements by:
 - improving the provision which the school makes for pupils with special educational needs and those supported through the pupil premium by making sure their needs are identified quickly and their progress is checked regularly so that they do not fall behind.
 - taking swift action to deal with inadequate teaching
 - making rigorous checks on teachers' planning and the progress being made by pupils in every class
 - involving subject leaders regularly in checking that actions are leading to consistently good teaching
 - ensuring that assessment information is accurate
 - ensuring that all staff with leadership responsibilities have the skills they need to accurately check the impact of the actions being taken
 - making sure that the governing body has a full picture and clear understanding of the school's performance and that they use this to hold senior leaders fully to account for their work.

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 2 to 3 July 2014.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised a range of documents and met with the Principal, senior leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the Isle Education Trust Board and a representative from the local authority.

Context

There have been no staff changes since the previous inspection.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The academy has continued to work hard to tackle pupils' previous levels of underachievement, with a sharp focus on key groups and classes, particularly boys, lower-ability pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding and those with additional learning needs.

Continuing improvements in the quality of provision and intervention work have ensured that children's development in the Early Years Foundation Stage remains secure and pupils in Key Stage 1 are continuing to make much better progress. Attainment levels at the end of Year 2 have improved at expected and higher levels and are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Similarly, pupils' overall achievement in each Key Stage 2 class is also accelerating; however, there remains work to do, particularly for pupils in Years 4 and 5 to address inconsistencies in progress and attainment between key groups, notably lower-ability pupils and those with additional learning needs.

Current assessment information for pupils in Year 6 indicates that attainment in the 2014 national tests is on course to improve in writing at expected and higher levels and in reading at higher levels. The academy has focused successfully on improving literacy, a key area for improvement at the previous inspection, with the introduction of a new commercial scheme, extending opportunities for all pupils to write regularly and a full review of the quality and impact of intervention. Although achievement remains broadly similar to national levels, academy leaders recognise the need to maintain the current focus on accelerating progress in mathematics across Key Stage 2 to ensure a similar rate of improvement in attainment and progress to that in reading and writing.

The quality of teaching

Academy leaders have continued to closely monitor the quality of teaching across the academy and its impact on achievement. There have been further improvements since the previous monitoring inspection in March. There is now a stronger picture of

accelerated and sustainable improvement evident in lesson observations and pupils' workbooks. Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching in all key stages.

Teachers know their pupils well and use skilful questioning and well-tailored activities to develop and extend their thinking. Teachers are also becoming more adept at redirecting their teaching to ensure that pupils' own ideas are fully considered in order to challenge pupils' understanding further. This work is also supported through the opportunities that pupils have to discuss their work with peers and with adults and the use of practical resources, where appropriate, to ensure that all pupils are able to fully access all aspects of their learning. In this, effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is also playing a key part in supporting achievement.

Workbooks also reflect this picture of improvement in achievement with consistent helpful marking and opportunities for pupils to respond and correct their work evident. Expectations are not yet as high across all subject areas as they are in literacy books, particularly in relation to spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In lessons, positive and respectful relationships between pupils and adults are evident; pupils work hard and are keen to succeed. They particularly enjoy taking part in discussions, which give them an opportunity to extend their thinking and ideas. They are now also taking greater responsibility for their learning, with a better understanding of the academy's high expectations. This work has been particularly promoted through the use of target and progress books in reading, writing and mathematics in lessons.

Pupils also behave well when moving around the academy and at social times. They are sensible and engage well with their peers and adults. Pupils understand what bullying is and would know who to turn to if they had any concerns. They feel safe and well looked after in the academy.

Attendance has continued to improve and is currently above the national average. In particular, the diligent work of the learning mentor has ensured that the profile of this key aspect of the academy's work remains high.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The Principal has ensured that the significant changes evident at the previous inspection have been consolidated. Academy leaders and staff have continued to focus on tackling the inconsistencies in classroom practice and the underachievement of targeted groups. As a result, teaching across all key stages is now allowing pupils to maintain their rate of progress between year groups. Academy leaders are continuing to focus, with some success, on accelerating the

progress of key groups. There is more work to do to ensure these pupils are able to successfully catch up with their peers.

Senior leaders are now taking greater responsibility for key aspects of the academy's work in English and mathematics, and in reviewing the provision for those pupils with additional needs. Their role in monitoring and developing provision in these areas has increased, with evidence of improvements in the quality of teaching and intervention work and in curriculum developments. Those leaders with responsibilities for subjects, other than English and mathematics, are now part of curriculum teams led by senior leaders. Their roles have continued to widen with more opportunities available to check and observe the academy's work in their subject area. The academy's work on all aspects of the curriculum is ensuring that it is well placed to implement the required changes in September.

Teachers have a better understanding of their accountability and value the feedback from leaders' regular checks, and the well-targeted professional development opportunities now available to develop and improve their practice further. The work of teaching assistants has also been strengthened, through a review of the quality of interventions and their inclusion within the curriculum team structure.

External support

The sponsor and the local authority are continuing to work productively together to support measurable improvement in the quality of provision and pupils' achievement. The academy's work is monitored on a weekly basis by a member of the advisory board, who is also a Trust board member. The sponsor has also supported the academy with curriculum aspects, including sport and transition work, human resources, public relations and financial matters. The local authority has continued to finance the work of the School Improvement Partner, who has supported the academy's work on assessment, leadership and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.