

Tribal
Kings Orchard
One Queen Street
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

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

Direct T 0117 311 5359
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

11 December 2014

Mrs Lynn Nash
Headteacher
Delaware Community Primary School
Drakewalls
Gunnislake
PL18 9EN

Dear Mrs Nash,

Special measures monitoring inspection of Delaware Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 and 10 December 2014 with Jen Southall HMI and Julie Dyer AI, 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 March 2014. 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 Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - making use of the wider expertise available within the federation and providing appropriate training to enable teachers to become as effective as possible
 - supporting teachers so that they know how to best help pupils improve their skills in punctuation, spelling and, particularly, in extended writing
 - ensuring that teachers all use the same methods for teaching phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) and provide appropriate challenge for more able readers
 - making sure that pupils have more opportunities to cover topics that include suitable science and humanities work.
- Raise the achievement of pupils to at least the standards expected nationally by:
 - ensuring that children in Reception are better prepared for joining Year 1 by increasing the focus on developing the skills that support work in the use of number, and in reading and writing
 - setting work at the right level for the most able pupils so they are challenged to fulfil their potential
 - developing the monitoring of the progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who attract the pupil premium, to ensure they are narrowing the attainment gaps with other pupils
 - improving pupils' skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics throughout the school so they achieve well regardless of their background, ability or starting point.
- Ensure that standards of behaviour are equally high in every classroom and with every member of staff by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are engaging and interesting for pupils
 - making sure that the new behaviour policy is applied consistently across the school.
- Ensure that school leaders and governors are contributing strongly and equally effectively to improving outcomes rapidly for pupils by:
 - appointing a suitable permanent headteacher at the earliest opportunity
 - challenging weak performance through regular and rigorous checking of the school's work
 - supporting the key subject leaders in English and mathematics to lead improvement in their subjects
 - developing subject leaders' understanding of how to use the information resulting from checks on pupils' progress to improve the quality of teaching
 - undertaking regular checks of teaching in all subjects, modelling best practice, and identifying appropriate training opportunities for all staff.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 December 2014

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, representatives from the governing body, senior and middle leaders and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and the school council and spoke informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Context

One member of the teaching staff is absent through illness, with a supply teacher teaching the class affected.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The most recent checks on pupils' learning provided by the school indicate that underachievement is beginning to be eradicated within the school. Children in the Reception class are making particularly good progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills and most are on track to be better prepared for joining Year 1. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good because teachers and other adults now provide a carefully structured and stimulating learning environment for children and pupils to learn in. The work seen in books shows pupils write frequently for a range of audiences. A focus on teaching joined-up handwriting also means all children are learning to form their letters correctly and developing neat writing habits. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are expected to achieve in line with national expectations by the end of this academic year. Where learning is strongest, teachers now regularly check during lessons on the progress individual pupils are making and use this information to adapt their teaching to provide more personalised support. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils also make good progress and their attainment gap is starting to narrow.

Pupils do not make consistently good progress through Years 3 to 6 because teaching is not yet consistently good. The lack of good progress is due in part to the legacy of underachievement but also due to ongoing teacher absence and some teachers' weaker subject knowledge, especially in mathematics. Most pupils are making good progress in reading but fewer pupils are currently on track to achieve end-of-year age-related standards in writing and mathematics. Where teaching is good, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to set work at the right levels for pupils, respond to their individual learning needs and challenge pupils effectively. When this happens, pupils display good attitudes to learning and they make good progress. A good example of this was seen during a mathematics lesson, where the teacher altered her questioning so that pupils could better understand what they

needed to do to multiply decimal numbers. Older pupils are improving their reading and writing skills. Evidence in pupils' books shows they are now making much better progress in writing because they frequently write about topics that interest them. Leaders have accurately identified mathematics as the next development priority.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving. No inadequate teaching was observed during the monitoring inspection. Teachers plan activities that effectively meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and so they make good progress. Senior leaders have begun to use the wider expertise available within the federation to provide appropriate training to help improve teachers' expertise. Teaching is now typically good in the early years and in Years 1 and 2. The school has adopted a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. All teachers now use the same methods for teaching phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make). In the Reception class, children are encouraged to take a growing responsibility for their learning. They are given regular opportunities to plan, review and talk about the work they have done with their classmates. Adults use this time very well to check children's understanding and extend their vocabulary. Pupils' reading skills are improving. Pupils who read to inspectors did so with confidence and successfully used their growing understanding of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words. Sometimes teachers do not pay sufficient attention in lessons to how well pupils are responding to what is being taught. Pupils do not always understand what they are required to do in lessons and so their good progress stalls.

Training for teachers and other adults has focused on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. As a result, pupils are becoming better at organising their thoughts and speaking in full sentences. This has begun to have the desired impact on improving the quality of pupils' writing. All adults set high expectations for pupils when they write and this is now clearly seen in the presentation of their work. Engaging displays of pupils' work on the walls in classrooms and in corridors reflect the school's current focus on developing writing. Where teaching is at its strongest, teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they are able to adapt their teaching to provide for all pupils' learning needs. For example, in an upper Key Stage 2 poetry lesson, pupils showed a very secure understanding of grammatical terms such as alliteration and pathetic fallacy. They used this knowledge to draft carefully worded First World War poems of their own. Teaching assistants are recognised as a valuable asset throughout the school. They are well deployed to support the learning of individual pupils and small groups.

Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and this is making a positive contribution to the improved progress most pupils are now making. Teachers' comments are mainly focused on what pupils need to do next in order to improve. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said their teachers' marking is helping them to understand how well they

are doing. However, pupils are not always given the time to respond to the comments in their books or complete the additional tasks set.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in and around school is now typically good. The new behaviour policy ensures all adults take a consistent approach and uphold the school's high expectations of pupils' behaviour. In lessons, pupils are showing improved attitudes to learning because their teachers capture their interests and better meet their learning needs. Pupils who spoke with inspectors stated that behaviour in school was now much better. They clearly explained how the school's 'diamond rules' are understood by everyone. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. The governing body carries out regular checks on safeguarding to ensure compliance. Pupils' overall attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. The school works well with parents in order to maintain pupils' good attendance and secure improvement where it is needed. Most parents who spoke with inspectors said they could see improved behaviour in school and were pleased with the better progress their children were now making. A few parents felt more could be done to improve behaviour further and to strengthen communication channels.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The determination of the executive headteacher and her deputy to bring about rapid and sustained improvements has begun to have a positive impact. Morale amongst staff is now good because all say they feel supported and encouraged to contribute to school improvement. Training for teachers and improved communications between senior leaders and the governing body have strengthened the school's capacity to secure improvements. Leaders' regular checks on the quality of teaching ensure any weaknesses are identified quickly and that teachers receive the professional development they need to improve. Members of the governing body say they are confident the executive headteacher is exercising the necessary rigorous and aspirational leadership essential to bring about lasting improvements. The three governors who were appointed by the local authority because of their previous experience of working with governing bodies have begun to share their expertise with other members of the governing body. They have established links with subject leaders, who now regularly provide them with information on the achievement of pupils. A review committee of governors now meets regularly with the executive headteacher to check on the work of the school. Training for the governing body is being provided by a National Leader of Governance (NLG) in order to give less experienced governors a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, governors are now exercising greater confidence in holding senior leaders to account. Governors and subject leaders now share a clearer understanding of how to use the information resulting from checks on pupils' progress to improve the

quality of teaching further. Some subject leaders lack the necessary leadership skills and there are weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics.

External support

The local authority continues to provide appropriate and timely support to the school, which is having a positive impact in bringing about lasting and sustainable improvements. The local authority representative is working alongside senior leaders and governors to broker professional development for all staff and to guide governors through the academisation process.