

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)



11 December 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 to your school on 9–10 December 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 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 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 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 fourth monitoring inspection on 9–10 December 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed teaching and learning in all of the classes in 10 lessons. She scrutinised pupils' books and heard some children reading. Seven of the observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher or one of the deputy headteachers. The inspector met with senior leaders, including leaders of mathematics, English, special educational needs and pupil premium provision. She met with members of the strategic intervention board. The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons and during a meeting. She scrutinised documents, including achievement data and monitoring records.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, two teachers have left the school and been replaced, including by one teacher from the linked infant school who is working in Year 3 to aid transition from Year 2. The leadership structure has been reviewed and two deputy headteachers from the infant school now lead mathematics and English across both schools. Four new teaching assistants have joined the staff to work with pupils with special educational needs and Year 3 pupils. The school is expanding from two to three forms of entry. There are now three classes in Year 3. The school is currently consulting stakeholders about the governors' plan to close the school and expand the age range of the infant school so that it becomes a primary school.

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

Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics improved in the summer 2014 assessments. However, it remained significantly below average. The proportion of pupils who made expected progress from their starting points was similar to average. Attainment in writing did not improve on the 2013 outcomes and not enough pupils made at least expected progress from their starting points. Too few pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in reading, writing or mathematics. The achievement data for pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 indicates that attainment is improving over time. A higher proportion of these pupils are on track to reach average and above-average levels of attainment. The slow progress of pupils in Year 3 that was seen at the time of the last inspection has improved because of effective additional support that pupils have received to help them catch up.

The majority of pupils are making good progress because, where weaker teaching persists, high levels of additional support help to meet pupils' specific learning needs, including for those who making slow progress.

The attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates are widest in Year 3, particularly in reading. In other year groups, the attainment of these

pupils matches other pupils. The school needs to monitor these gaps in attainment more closely.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching in Year 3 has improved. A new teacher from the infant school is aiding better transition from Year 2 and this is paying dividends. The executive headteacher has plans to spread this effective practice more widely.

Elements of teaching in other year groups continue to improve. School leaders have set clear expectations of how to teach at John Bunyan Junior School. Daily 'maths meetings' have been introduced. During these short lessons, pupils practise their basic mathematics skills playing interactive games and singing number songs. Pupils enjoy these sessions and they are helpful in learning number facts, including the times tables. Daily 'spelling attack' lessons address common weaknesses in spelling and teach phonics skills to pupils who need additional help to learn the sounds letters make.

All pupils have individual targets to improve their writing and mathematics. They are reviewed and updated regularly. In the most effective lessons, teachers refer to pupils' targets and use them to set appropriate learning tasks. This practice is not yet universal, however. All lessons include success criteria which help pupils to understand what they need to do to be successful in lessons. Teachers' use of these criteria is still too variable, however, and some are not matched well enough to pupils' capabilities.

In some writing lessons, groups of pupils are not clear enough about what they need to focus on to improve their grammar or punctuation. All pupils have more regular opportunities to write at length across a variety of genres, including reports, stories and poetry. Teachers more regularly plan writing lessons to engage the interest of boys to help close the gaps in attainment between them and the girls. Writing about film clips and links to history topics are proving more engaging for pupils, including the boys.

Teachers' marking has improved and pupils receive detailed feedback about what they have done well. Teachers' comments to show pupils how to improve their work are sometimes not precise enough to be helpful.

The English leader has laid out a clear and appropriate strategy to teach reading across the school. Some teaching does not effectively deliver this strategy, and more training and support is planned. Despite this, pupils enjoy reading and there is a growing culture of reading in the school. Pupils are very positive about the new library and the range of books they can choose.

While teachers continue to develop their practice with training and support, common weaknesses persist in some lessons. Expectations are sometimes too low and this means that pupils complete activities which do not move their learning on quickly.

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

Pupils behave well in their lessons and around the school. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are markedly more positive. Lessons are usually more engaging and pupils are enthusiastic to complete their work. They concentrate well.

Pupils know what bullying is and how to stay safe. They have some strategies to stay safe on the internet. They say behaviour has improved and name-calling is now uncommon. The executive headteacher responds to their rare concerns through the 'worry box', where pupils can ask to talk to her. Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced and most lessons run smoothly. Pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour are supported well in their lessons including by teaching assistants, who make a positive contribution to learning.

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

The executive headteacher continues to drive improvements with vigour. She has secured the confidence of the school community. Despite higher expectations and high levels of scrutiny, morale is high and staff are determined to improve outcomes for pupils. Key to leaders' success in improving pupils' achievement is the very close monitoring of pupils' progress. When leaders are concerned that pupils are falling behind, they act quickly to provide appropriate support, including in small groups.

The leadership capacity of the school has grown with two deputy headteachers from the infant school who now lead English and mathematics across both schools. They are clear about what needs to improve in their subjects. They provide training for staff and support pupils who need additional help.

The leader of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs tracks the progress and attainment of pupils very carefully. She ensures that pupils who need help receive it. She evaluates the impact of the one-to-one and small-group support they are given. If support is not making a difference, then new solutions are explored. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is improving. The leader provides a training programme for teaching assistants to address school priorities and their individual training needs.

The new leader for pupil premium provision is developing her role. There needs to be greater focus on closing gaps in attainment for these pupils, who make up approximately half of the school population. The funding the school receives for these pupils is not always targeted well enough on improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

The leadership team monitors teaching and learning very regularly and all teachers have targets for improvement. Teachers are encouraged to use professional logs to record their progress towards meeting their targets. The usefulness of this development record is too variable and it is not wholly effective in improving teaching. School leaders do not draw all of the information they gather about the quality of teaching to form a coherent view of teaching over time. Reports to governors about the quality of teaching convey an overgenerous picture.

Leaders are working to ensure that all pupils have a rich and varied curriculum. Pupils say they enjoy their art and physical education lessons. However, the quality of pupils' work in subjects such as history, geography and science does not match that found in English and mathematics books.

The strategic intervention board provides governance for the school and includes governors from the infant and junior schools. Governors know the school well. They provide appropriate support to school leaders and challenge them rigorously. They have an ambitious vision for the school and a determination to achieve it. A review of the effectiveness of the strategic intervention board is planned for January 2015.

The required safeguarding checks on new members of staff are made and recorded diligently.

### **External support**

The support of the local authority has reduced as the school's own capacity has grown. The school works closely with the local teaching alliance, which provides support to improve teaching and leadership. This support is helpful and is making a difference.