

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 6188524

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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

**Direct T** 01695 566863

**Direct F** 01695 729320

**Direct email:** jbenett@cftb.com



13 March 2015

Mr Andrew Knighton  
Headteacher  
Shield Row Primary School  
King Edward VIII Terrace  
Shield Row  
Stanley  
County Durham  
DH9 0HQ

Dear Mr Knighton

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Shield Row Primary School**

Following my visit with to your school with Graeme Clark, additional inspector, on 11 and 12 March 2015, 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 September 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 and Adult Services for Durham.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in (insert month and year)**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables all pupils, in all subjects, especially those in Years 1 to 4, to be challenged in their learning and reach their full potential, by:
  - eradicating inadequate teaching and raising all teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - developing teachers' skills and confidence in assessing the standard of pupils' work
  - planning activities that take full account of what pupils already know so that activities fully challenge all abilities, sustain pupils' concentration and give rise to fewer opportunities for them to drift off-task
  - ensuring teachers respond appropriately to pupils' responses to their questions so that they can quickly address any misunderstandings in their learning
  - utilising teaching assistants more effectively during whole-class and small-group intervention sessions
  - ensuring that the activities children choose for themselves in the early years are sufficiently challenging, especially for boys and those that are most able, so that children make a more rapid start to their learning.
- Address the weaknesses in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills, particularly in the early years and Years 1 to 4, so that pupils across the school make at least good progress, by:
  - improving the school's approach to the teaching of phonics so that work is matched closely to pupils' abilities and new sounds are learned quickly, including through opportunities to practise writing and spelling
  - providing training for staff so they know how pupils' English and mathematics skills should develop as they move through the school
  - planning more regular opportunities for pupils to develop their English and mathematics skills in other subjects of the curriculum
  - improving the quality of activities provided in the early years, both indoors and outdoors, so that children have more opportunities to practise their early reading, mark making and number skills.
- Urgently improve leadership and management, including governance, by developing the skills and knowledge of leaders at all levels, by:
  - setting more ambitious targets for what pupils are to achieve at each stage of their education
  - establishing an effective system for tracking, analysing and evaluating the achievement of pupils
  - ensuring improvement plans are based upon an accurate evaluation of the whole-school's performance, prioritise the most significant areas of weakness and provide measurable targets and timescales to aid rigorous evaluation

- monitoring the performance of teachers in accordance with the National Teachers' Standards so that they understand their strengths and weaknesses, are held to account for closing gaps in pupils' achievement and an effective programme of training can be undertaken to raise the quality of teaching
- developing the role of subject leaders so that they take greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and achievement within their areas of responsibility
- ensuring governors provide robust challenge to leaders and carry out their own checks to verify the headteacher's view.

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

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 and 12 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, four representatives of the governing body and two education development partners from the local authority. They talked formally to a group of pupils and informally to pupils in lessons, around school and on the yard. One inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day.

### **Context**

There have been some changes since the monitoring visit of December 2014. A teacher and a teaching assistant are on long-term sickness absence. The smaller Year 3 and 4 mixed class has been separated and all pupils are now educated in single year-groups. An Academy Order has recently been passed for the school to join Tudhoe Learning Trust; procedures are still at an early stage.

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

Evidence from observation of lessons, pupils' books and assessments of pupils' work indicate that for most pupils, progress is hastening; particularly in reading and writing. However, evidence also shows progress is not accelerating consistently well across the school or in narrowing gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in all classes. Gaps are narrowing effectively in Year 6 and Year 5 but remain wide in Year 4. Changes to classroom organisation, more one-to-one support, small-group work and training for staff are some of the strategies being used to tackle this. Progress in the early years is also accelerating. The majority of children in both Nursery and Reception are developing skills closer to those expected for their age. Although the gap between all children and disadvantaged children in the Reception class remains wide, their current achievements are already above that found in the previous year group by the end of the summer term. The Nursery and Reception teachers keep records on how children are doing across the many different areas of curriculum. Leaders do not use this detailed information to report to governors how things are going for all children or for different groups regularly. This means governors cannot check whether last year's underachievement in children's reading, writing and mathematics development remains a concern or whether improvements implemented in the early years phase are making a positive difference in narrowing the gap between boys and girls achievements in these subjects. Indoor and outdoor areas have been developed to increase the range of opportunities for children to experience literacy and numeracy activities, enabling children to make decisions for themselves and develop their speaking and communication skills. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to utilise the space already available outdoors and to develop further the provision; plans are in place to tackle this.

## **The quality of teaching**

Since the monitoring inspection in December 2014 the continued focus of leaders and local authority staff on improving teachers' skills has helped to improve the quality of teaching across the school and, consequently, to hastening pupils' progress in more lessons. All teachers have their own action plans to improve weaker aspects of their practice and leaders are starting to check progress towards improvement in these areas. Training in literacy and the teaching of phonics (the letters that sounds make), from local authority staff and the school's literacy coordinator is leading to improvements in teachers' grasp of teaching phonics. As a result more pupils are using the strategies they are learning to develop their spelling and reading skills. There is still some work to do to ensure that all children's skills develop at the pace of which they are capable. Sometimes teachers do not always move children, who know their letter sounds, on to the next stage quickly enough or check who is not listening or not understanding during whole-group sessions.

Local authority staff have worked with teachers to ensure that they have a more accurate understanding of pupils' progress in their books and in the assessments they make about pupils' learning. Planning has improved and some teachers are using this assessment information to set work that helps pupils move on from their starting points effectively. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupils' needs are met well. In some lessons teachers are still not making sure that pupils with special educational needs or the most able are given the right kind of work. For example, mathematics work is not always deepening the most able pupils' understanding or ensuring that they utilise their knowledge of number-bonds quickly and efficiently in lessons. Books and observations show that in some lessons pupils waste too much time cutting out and sticking things into books, rather than mastering mathematical concepts. Teachers have been trained to improve the teaching of calculations but not all are using this training to good effect. Some do not have a good enough understanding of the mathematics curriculum to identify the next steps pupils need to take to improve their work, or to deepen and extend their knowledge fully.

The quality and usefulness of teachers' marking and feedback is improving. As a result pupils report that they have a better understanding of how well they are doing in their literacy and numeracy work. Leaders' work to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not making a strong enough difference. Science and topic books seen were of poor quality and showed missed opportunities to extend pupils' writing or challenge common grammatical or spelling errors. All staff have been to observe and learn from, practice in an outstanding primary school, Prince Bishop's and some to Tudhoe Colliery Primary, but it is too soon to see the impact of this work. The use of teaching assistants is becoming more effective. In a number of lessons they were well-deployed to support pupils in their learning and to carry out short-term small group interventions. In the Nursery, the teacher's carefully selected activities for the teaching assistant ensured that one group of children got specialised help in

learning their letters and another group to tackle weaknesses in their fine motor skill development. Not all are as well-deployed; this limits the effectiveness of this additional resource.

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

Pupils behave well as they move around the school and play together at break and lunch times safely and cooperatively. They are friendly and show respect towards one another and adults. Pupils usually arrive promptly to school and follow the instructions they are given. They say that they enjoy lessons and report that the school's rewards and sanctions-based behaviour policy is applied consistently well by teachers. They report that lessons are rarely disrupted by the poor behaviour of others. The September 2014 inspection report judged behaviour and safety to require improvement because pupils lost concentration or their enthusiasm and attention waned when lessons were not well planned. Whilst there has been some improvement, pupils' attitudes, their 'behaviour for learning', is not consistently good in all lessons. There are still occasions when pupils are quietly off-task, daydreaming, fidgeting, or fiddling with pencils, and teachers do not challenge this inattention quickly enough or check whether pupils understand what has been taught when off-task.

Pupils' attendance continues to be broadly average. Governors receive whole-school attendance data and information on the actions being taken to improve regularly. However, leaders do not analyse the attendance of different groups to see whether some are absent more frequently than others. Information for September to March for the last two years shows that boys' and girls' attendance has improved but girls' attendance is below that of boys. There is no analysis on the potential reasons for this or the difference in attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, or the impact of actions taken on such pupils' attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well-promoted by the harmonious relationships in school, assemblies, the curriculum and a range of visits out of school or extra activities beyond lessons. A wide range of high-quality displays and art work around the school capture the diversity of opportunities effectively.

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

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have accepted the judgement of special measures and are improving their own skills to help pupils achieve more successfully. They have willingly received guidance and support from the local authority and from the outstanding primary school, and have spurred staff on in working together to drive the required improvements. Morale is therefore high. Teachers report that they are seeing improvements in the progress pupils are making and say they are held to account more robustly for their pupils' achievements. Teachers' performance targets are now linked to the National Teachers' Standards including pupils' achievements in

class. The headteacher is becoming more skilled in checking the impact of these targets in half-termly pupil progress meetings.

The improved action plan has clearer targets against which governors can measure the impact of the actions identified. Plans are being amended to ensure that governors can check how well the school is narrowing the gaps between pupils entitled to the pupil premium and other pupils, and between boys and girls, more easily. Middle leaders are continuing to develop their roles in monitoring and checking the quality of teaching, pupils' progress, marking and assessment effectively. Joint lesson observations with senior local authority staff continue to help build leaders' skills. They are becoming more adept in identifying strengths and weaker areas of teachers' practice. Lesson monitoring records and book scrutiny reports show they do not always focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on the progress of all pupils. There are clearly-missed opportunities to check if pupils are off-task or if work is not matched well enough to pupils' different needs. Senior leaders accept the evaluation of the school's work has been too optimistic and not always an accurate reflection of the school's performance. They know that more needs to be done to improve the accuracy of information to governors and to the special steering group set up by senior officers in the local authority that monitors and checks the impact of actions monthly.

Governors' skills in holding leaders to account in driving the required improvements are improving. The review of their effectiveness is complete and an action plan has been developed. It has yet to be implemented, but includes strategies already established to check the school's work, such as regular visits, learning walks and reviewing pupils' books with leaders. Governors are becoming more adept at asking searching questions of leaders but need to continue to challenge responses, particularly when information provided is inaccurate; for example, when reports indicate attendance is good but it is at best average and below average for pupils known to be entitled to the pupil premium. Governors do not have regular information on the attendance of groups yet, or timely information on the broader range of achievements of children in Nursery or Reception. Although the last inspection report is now on the school's website, governors have yet to ensure that the website fully-meets statutory requirements. Action is now being taken to rectify these matters.

## **External support**

Leaders continue to receive good support from a range of local authority staff that is making a positive difference to teachers' skills and, consequently, to pupils improving progress in lessons. Senior and middle leaders are becoming more accomplished in monitoring the work of the school as a result of the guidance provided, and local authority staff are taking a more strategic, monitoring approach as leaders manage the improvements needed more effectively themselves. Recent opportunities for all staff to work with the Tudhoe Learning Trust and their outstanding primary school are developing leaders' and teachers' skills further. Plans are afoot to enable much closer working before the school's transition to the Trust in September 2015.