

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 9167  
**Direct email:** farhan.aslam@serco.com

14 May 2015

Marie-Claire Bretherton  
Benjamin Adlard Primary School  
Sandsfield Lane  
Gainsborough  
DN21 1DB

Dear Ms Bretherton

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Benjamin Adlard Primary School**

Following my visit with Clare Cossor, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 12–13 May 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 March 2015. 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 NQTs.

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 Rapid Improvement Board and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Duignan

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For academies [[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)]

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6, so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do, especially the most-able pupils
  - all teachers regularly checking throughout their lessons that different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making sufficient progress and, if necessary, adapting the tasks given
  - providing pupils with focused guidance in marking on how to improve the quality of their work.
  
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - resolving the issue of the permanent leadership of the academy and distributing leadership responsibilities more evenly throughout the staff
  - developing the support and challenge roles of the members of the Rapid Improvement Board who are not members of the academy's staff
  - making sure information about pupils' achievement is accurate and the systems for tracking progress are efficient
  - ensuring that leaders check more often that pupils' work is of a high quality and provide teachers with written feedback to help them improve their teaching
  - helping subject leaders to make an effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.
  
- Improve achievement in writing and mathematics by:
  - improving pupils' grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills
  - giving pupils regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects
  - developing pupils' calculation skills, including their knowledge of multiplication facts
  - giving pupils regular opportunities to use and apply numeracy skills in different contexts, including problem-solving.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of pupil premium funding, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 12–13 May 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the acting head of school, senior and subject leaders, and a member of the Rapid Improvement Board. Inspectors observed learning in all classes, some jointly with academy leaders. They met with groups of pupils in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6, and spoke with pupils informally at playtimes. A few parents spoke with inspectors before school. The lead inspector spoke by telephone to the head of primary schools from the CfBT Schools Trust, the academy's sponsor.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, a Year 3 teacher has been appointed. By arrangement with the executive headteacher, the newly appointed head of school had not begun his post, although he had spent one day a week at the academy.

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

There are signs that pupils' achievement is improving. Academy leaders predict that the proportion of pupils making the expected level of progress by the end of Key Stage 2 will rise significantly this year, and the attainment of these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is predicted to increase. Leaders have taken care to ensure the accuracy of these predictions by arranging for teachers to moderate pupils' work with colleagues from partner schools in the federation of which the academy is a part. The predicted improvements indicate some progress, and reflect leaders' ambitions to drive up standards. However, they will not be enough to ensure that the academy will meet the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expected progress and attainment for the end of Year 6; too few pupils will achieve in line with expected outcomes for pupils at this age.

At the end of Year 2, the picture looks less favourable. Pupils' attainment is predicted to be well below average. These pupils early years foundation stage with levels of prior attainment that were well below others nationally, and well below others in the academy. Some have significant special educational needs. The proportion making the expected progress is predicted to rise this year, although too few of them will make the progress they should, especially in writing. However, observations showed that, as a result of good teaching, they were making good progress in class.

Teachers regularly correct pupils' grammar and spelling, and encourage pupils to rewrite any word they spell incorrectly. This is helping to improve pupils' skills in these areas, although not all pupils follow their teacher's advice.

Work in older pupils' books, in particular, showed an increasingly confident use of punctuation, including high-level punctuation; in discussions, pupils could explain the use and function of punctuation in a sentence.

Inspectors saw some examples of pupils improving the legibility, quality and consistency of their handwriting. In some instances, teachers do not impose their expectations of good handwriting, and accept work that is poorly presented. In some cases, this affected the accuracy of pupils' calculations.

The introduction of the new 'Cornerstone curriculum' has given pupils more opportunities to write at length in different subjects. Pupils in Year 5, for example, had written biographies of Catherine Howard, based on the research they had carried out. The best examples were detailed, well structured, and used a range of techniques to engage the reader in their subject. Sometimes, teachers accept too little work of pupils who are able to write confidently and fluently.

Similarly, there are more opportunities for pupils to practise their calculation skills in different subjects, although this is less well developed in Key Stage 1.

### **The quality of teaching**

Work in pupils' books, discussions with pupils and observations of teaching indicate that the quality of teaching shows improvement. In some classes, pupils make good progress as a result of teaching that captures their interest and sets high expectations for what they can do. The quality and consistency of marking has improved: teachers mark in line with the academy's marking policy and pupils understand what the different codes mean, and how to improve their work. Some teachers give clear advice on how to improve a piece of work, or add a further challenge for pupils to complete to extend their learning. This was evident, for example, in Year 6 literacy books. In some cases, teachers focus on what pupils have done well and do not give clear next steps for pupils to improve their work. Not all pupils consistently respond to teachers' advice. This is limiting the progress they make.

Observations in some classes revealed higher expectations of what the most-able pupils, in particular, can achieve. For example, in a science lesson in Year 6, the most-able pupils could give clear, confident and accurate explanations of the functions of the skeleton. The lesson had been well planned to ensure that pupils of different abilities could make good progress, and the teacher confidently assessed pupils' progress and adapted the learning, as necessary, at key points during the lesson. In a Year 2 class, a descriptive writing task showed a high level of challenge for the most-able pupils. Good planning, coupled with clear and passionate delivery, captured the interest of pupils. The pupils demonstrated good progress and attainment, as well as positive attitudes to learning, as a result of their teacher's high expectations.

However, there is still not enough good teaching across the academy to enable pupils to make the progress they should. Where teaching is less effective than it should be, leaders are taking effective action to address the issues. Examples of the best teaching practice within the academy are being shared with staff to help them to identify how they can improve their own work, and staff from the partner academies in the federation are supporting teachers in different classes to improve their practice.

The use of teaching assistants across the academy is inconsistent. In some classes, they are deployed effectively to support learning, and teachers' planning shows how they have carefully considered this in advance. In some classes, particularly during whole-class teaching, teaching assistants are less effective in supporting learning. Not all teachers use information about pupils' progress to plan learning effectively, or take account of the progress of different groups in their planning.

Effective teaching strategies were observed during a 'nurture group' session and, as a result, pupils made good progress and demonstrated a strong sense of pride in their work.

Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their reading skills using a range of different texts. Some pupils spoken with showed a lack of awareness of different types of books, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to experience different types of books around the academy. Not all pupils bring their books back from home, and there are ineffective strategies in place to address this.

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

In the majority of lessons visited, pupils behaved well and with due regard for the health and safety of themselves and others. Warm and supportive relationships with their teachers have a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and enable pupils to learn well. Teachers know their pupils, and their families, very well. Parents told the inspector how much they appreciate the efforts that teachers go to speak to them at the end of the school day and to let them know how their children have got on.

In discussions with inspectors, however, pupils reported that behaviour in lessons sometimes prevents them from learning well. Individual class teachers are beginning to recognise their responsibilities in supporting pupils with particular behavioural difficulties within classrooms, and ensuring that these pupils have the skills to cope in these situations. Not all teachers have received the training and guidance they need to ensure that learning is not disrupted by pupils' poor behaviour.

At playtimes, the majority of pupils get on well and play sensibly. Sometimes, play can be too boisterous and pupils begin the afternoon session, in particular, in an overexcited frame of mind. Boys playing football in the caged area, for example, were observed becoming unruly, and this went unnoticed by the supervisors on duty. Pupils told the inspector that pupils sometimes argue over equipment, and that some pupils engage in play-fighting, although this is not allowed. Leaders recognise that a more structured approach to these sessions would ensure that pupils behave safely and well at these times.

Teachers ensure that pupils receive positive messages about managing their behaviour and their emotions. For example, in an assembly in Year 1, pupils learned about the importance of resilience. Many pupils told inspectors about the effective support they had received to improve their behaviour, and were greatly appreciative of the help given to them, and their families, by the pastoral support leader.

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

The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education and has responsibility for this and the two partner academies in the federation. She demonstrates a high level of ambition for the development of the academy, and is determined to secure its rapid improvement. At the time of the last monitoring visit, she had quickly drawn up clear plans for improvement, with measurable milestones to help leaders ensure that actions are on track. Leaders have prepared detailed reports for members of the Rapid Improvement Board and hold regular discussions with them about their work. The academy's own evaluation shows that, while not all milestones set for the summer term have been met, the academy is making progress towards them. The academy had appointed a head of school who was due to take up his post after Easter. This appointment was, for good reason, delayed until May. The new head of school has been spending time in the academy prior to taking up his appointment full time. However, the lack of a permanent and full-time head of school has meant that the academy has lacked capacity to ensure that all the necessary improvements are being implemented quickly enough.

Leaders, including subject leaders, monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' work on a regular basis, and ensure that teachers receive feedback on their teaching. Not all observations focus sharply enough on the impact of teaching on learning, and the progress that pupils and groups of pupils make in lessons. Leaders do not yet analyse information about pupils' achievement in sufficient depth to enable them to fully and accurately evaluate the impact of their work. This is slowing the rate of improvement across the academy.

Pupils told inspectors how much they are enjoying the new curriculum. They particularly enjoy the opportunities that it brings for practical, hands-on learning, and were most enthusiastic about dissecting a heart in a recent science lesson.

Leaders have taken effective action to engage more parents in the work of the academy. Since the last inspection, they have held two parental forums which, although not well attended, provided an opportunity for parents to meet with leaders and learn about the progress of the academy. Leaders have been creative in using other methods to inform parents about the academy's work, such as social media. Parents told inspectors that they find the website useful, especially for checking when homework is set.

Governance continues to strengthen because governors now have greater first-hand knowledge of the work of the academy. The Rapid Improvement Board receives regular information about the performance of the academy and has the skills and expertise to check the accuracy of this information and ask challenging questions of leaders. Governors pay frequent visits to the academy to check for themselves the progress being made. These visits provide governors with a useful insight into the academy's work.

The external review of governance and use of the pupil premium spending has now been carried out, although the report was not available at the time of the inspection. This will be checked at the next monitoring visit.

### **External support**

The academy's sponsor, the CfBT Schools Trust, has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses across the academy. The Chair of the Rapid Improvement Board is director of education at the trust, and the executive headteacher is held accountable for the progress of the academy to the trust through the Rapid Improvement Board. Not all leaders were fully aware of the role of the trust in helping the academy to improve, although they were able to say how they, and individual teachers, had been supported by the partner academies in the federation and the teaching school alliance. The trust has deployed a specialist leader of education and other teachers from the partner academies to work alongside teachers in coaching triads. The impact of this support is evident in the improving picture of teaching across the academy.