

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

Direct T 0121 679 9153
Direct email: naik.sandhu@serco.com



10 June 2015

Catherine Rindl
Interim Headteacher
Nansen Primary School
Naseby Road
Birmingham
B8 3HG

Dear Mrs Rindl

Special measures monitoring inspection of Nansen Primary School

Following my visit with Shahnaz Maqsood, Additional Inspector, and Alwyne Jolly, Additional Inspector, to your school on 8–9 June 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 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.

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 Chief Executive Officer of the Trust, the Chair of the Local Governing Body, the Academies Advisers Unit and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Make sure that all leaders and managers keep pupils safe and prepare them for life in modern Britain by:
 - ensuring that pupils understand how to deal with all types of bullying
 - working with other agencies to make sure that pupils recognise the dangers and risks associated with extremism and radicalisation
 - implementing a programme of religious education that helps pupils understand the main beliefs of all major religions
 - making sure there is a suitably qualified person to administer paediatric first aid.

- Make sure that the governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities by:
 - having fair and transparent recruitment processes
 - ensuring equal opportunities for staff and pupils
 - making sure the academy provides a broad range of subjects for all pupils
 - providing effectively for pupils' cultural development
 - improving the management and checking procedures of the academy's finances.

- Ensure teachers improve their teaching and raise pupils' attainment, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, by:
 - making sure that leaders check on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make
 - checking that teachers' marking helps pupils improve their work
 - insisting that teachers take account of what pupils already know and understand when planning activities, especially for the more-able pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs
 - making sure that teachers always spell words correctly
 - making sure that pupils spell correctly, use grammar and punctuation appropriately and write legibly
 - using information about pupils' achievement to check carefully how well different groups of pupils are learning
 - using assessment information to identify pupils' needs more quickly
 - appointing a full-time and qualified special educational needs coordinator.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 8–9 June 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Chief Executive Officer and the director of the academy trust, the interim headteacher, senior leaders, the headteachers of Nelson Mandela Primary School, Arden Primary School, Lillian de Lissa Nursery School, and the executive headteacher of the Greet Teaching School Alliance. Inspectors also met with the Chair and three members of the Local Governing Body. They spoke informally with pupils and parents. Inspectors observed lessons and reviewed examples of pupils' writing, mathematics and topic work with school leaders. They took account of the 62 Ofsted staff questionnaire responses.

Context

The Department of Education changed the school's sponsored arrangements in March 2015. Core Education Trust replaced the previous sponsors. The trust appointed the previous executive principal as the Chief Executive Officer. New board members, directors and governors were also appointed.

Following the previous monitoring inspection, the Core Education Trust commissioned the Greet Teaching School Alliance to strengthen leadership. In the first instance, the headteacher of Nelson Mandela Primary School assumed the role of interim headteacher for two and a half days per week. The headteacher of Arden Primary School took on the role of interim headteacher for the remaining two and a half days. In April 2015, the headteacher of Benson Community School was appointed as the new interim headteacher. She works at the school for three days a week. The headteacher of Nelson Mandela Primary School and the headteacher of Arden Primary School work at the school one day per week.

The Greet Teaching School Alliance also arranged extensive support for teachers. Staff in Key Stages 1 and 2 are receiving support from staff at Benson Community School, Nelson Mandela Primary School and Arden Primary School. Staff in the early years are receiving support from the headteacher of Lillian de Lissa Nursery School.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, three teachers have left the school. One vice principal is no longer working at the school. Two new assistant headteachers have been appointed. One joined the school in April; the second will take up post in September. As reported previously, the trustees have appointed a full-time and qualified special educational needs coordinator and have ensured that qualified staff administer paediatric first aid.

Achievement of pupils at the school

While standards remain below those expected in reading, writing and mathematics, they are rising steadily across the school. Lesson observations and work in pupils' books show that pupils are making faster progress than at the time of the last monitoring inspection. This is especially the case in the early years and in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is generally stronger in these years than in the rest of the school. Although pupils are making better progress in Years 3 to 6, there remain variations between classes. This is due to continuing inconsistencies in teaching and the numerous changes of class teacher. As reported previously, the most-able pupils and those who are disabled and have special educational needs are capable of making faster progress.

Pupils' knowledge of different aspects of mathematics is developing well. Teachers are ensuring that pupils know how to add, subtract, divide and multiply with accuracy. They also make sure that pupils use the correct mathematical language during discussions. Work in pupils' books shows that there are insufficient occasions for pupils to deepen their mathematical understanding by using their knowledge of number to solve a range of complex problems.

Some improvements are evident in reading. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident with using their knowledge of sounds and letters to read difficult words. Lower-ability pupils and those who are disabled and have special educational needs do not always know how to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words. Senior leaders acknowledge that further work is required to ensure that all reading sessions enable pupils to make rapid progress with their reading.

Pupils are getting better at using punctuation and grammar accurately in their writing. They are also beginning to use a wider range of vocabulary in order to make their writing more interesting. Pupils' spelling remains weak. Additionally, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write so that they can develop their writing skills. This is preventing pupils from making faster progress.

The quality of teaching

Teaching has strengthened. Teachers are responding positively to the advice from the four headteachers and staff from the four schools. School records confirm that, although the proportion of good teaching is increasing, there is still more to do to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better, especially in Key Stage 2.

Where pupils make the strongest gains in learning, teachers use the information they have about pupils' achievement to ensure that activities are well planned for pupils of different abilities. Teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding and probe pupils' thinking. Staff also keep a watchful eye on pupils as

they learn and they provide appropriate support for those who find their work difficult.

Where pupils do not make fast enough progress, it is mainly because the activities for the most-able pupils and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not well matched to their ability or particular learning needs. Additionally, teachers do not always make sure that pupils know exactly what they need to do to complete their work successfully. As a result, pupils make errors in their work.

Teaching in the early years has markedly improved. The activities in the Reception classes are particularly well planned and encourage children to be curious and use their imagination. A group of children, for instance, were captivated by the giant African land snails. They accurately described the snails and counted the cucumber slices that the snails had started to eat. In the Nursery class, staff do not always make sure that the children are clear about what they are learning when they are working on their own. Occasionally, staff in the early years miss the chance to extend children's speaking skills because they too readily accept brief responses to questions.

Teachers' marking has improved but remains variable. At its best, marking provides pupils with helpful advice so that pupils can improve their work. Examples of such marking were seen in Years 1 and 2. Pupils across the school are taking greater pride in their work and writing much more neatly. However, some pupils still find it difficult to form their letters correctly and are not taught how to improve their handwriting.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost half of the staff that responded to the Ofsted questionnaire raised concerns about pupils' behaviour. Inspectors found that, while the behaviour of pupils is not consistently good, it is noticeably better than in the past. Leaders are using a suitable range of rewards and consequences in order to encourage pupils to behave well. School records show an increase in the number of incidents because staff and pupils are more willing to alert senior leaders to concerns about behaviour. Pupils confirmed that staff help them to feel safe and that staff respond more quickly to behaviour issues. One commented, 'I now have the courage to speak up because I know that the interim headteacher will be fair.'

In lessons, most pupils listen carefully and take turns to speak during discussions. Teachers have created an ethos where pupils are not afraid to make mistakes. When activities fail to capture pupils' interest, some start to fidget and stop paying attention. Some pupils do not always behave appropriately when they are taught by temporary teachers.

Behaviour around school is not always good. When pupils are accompanied by an adult, they walk calmly and quietly. However, when an adult is not present, a few older boys and girls choose to run through corridors and raise their voices. Senior leaders have employed additional supervisors and mentors to ensure pupils are adequately supervised during breaks. As a consequence, behaviour in the playground has improved. Although football games in the Key Stage 2 playground are now supervised by an adult, the football area takes up the majority of the playground space. This leaves the pupils who do not want to play football confined to the outskirts of the playground.

The deputy headteacher continues to ensure that the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe meet statutory requirements. She makes sure that staff receive the most up-to-date training and that school policies reflect the latest guidance. The deputy headteacher has recently produced individual personal education plans for the looked-after pupils in the school. Although these pupils are receiving suitable support, the learning targets within their individual education plans are not sufficiently challenging.

Even though overall attendance since September 2014 remains well below that expected for primary schools, attendance since April 2015 has risen from 93.7% to 96.0%. Procedures for following up concerns about pupils' attendance are robust. In one recent case, staff informed the local authority about a missing pupil. The local authority responded by carrying out its own investigation to establish the location of the pupil before confirming with the school that the pupil could be taken off the school roll.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Most staff that responded to the inspection questionnaire believe the school is well led and managed. Inspectors found that, in partnership with the three other headteachers, the new interim headteacher is taking determined action to improve the school. As a consequence, pupils are making better progress than at the time of the last monitoring inspection. In a short space of time, the interim headteacher has gained an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.

The trust has considerably strengthened the systems for checking the difference the headteachers from the four schools are making to teaching. The executive headteacher of the Greet Teaching School Alliance regularly collates information about teaching and presents this to the local governing body and the trust. Additionally, the Chief Executive Officer carries out his own checks by visiting lessons, reviewing pupils' work and talking to staff. Their most recent reports correctly identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching. The executive headteacher of Greet Teaching School Alliance is planning to broaden her reports to include details of the impact teaching is having on the progress of different groups of pupils.

Not all of the leaders in the school have the expertise required to lead developments in their areas of responsibility. The assistant headteachers and the teachers with responsibility for English and mathematics have increased their levels of involvement in reviewing the work of staff. However, their written feedback to teachers following discussions about pupils' achievement, visits to lessons and checks on pupils' work is not always precise enough. It does not identify the specific actions teachers need to take to help different groups of pupils make better progress. The teacher with responsibility for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs continues to ensure that these pupils receive the additional support to which they are entitled. Nevertheless, this teacher is still not helping all staff effectively meet these pupils' particular learning needs in the classroom. The interim headteacher has planned training for these leaders to start immediately.

The teacher with responsibility for the curriculum continues to provide staff with helpful advice. This is enabling teachers to ensure that pupils develop relevant skills and knowledge across a broad range of subjects. School assemblies and religious education lessons are successfully helping pupils to learn about different faiths and life in modern Britain. Pupils spoke particularly positively about the 'value of the month'. By focusing on matters such as responsibility, trust, and tolerance, teachers are helping pupils to appreciate differing views and the part that pupils can play in creating a harmonious community.

The members of the local governing body have benefited from their visit to Greet Teaching School Alliance and local authority training. Members understand their roles and responsibilities. They have high expectations of school leaders, pupils and the community. Through their meetings and regular visits to the school, they are checking the work of the school for themselves. In response to a request from governors, school leaders are now presenting the local governing body with succinct information about pupils' achievement. This is enabling governors to ask probing questions about the impact of the headteachers on pupils' achievement. Governors are planning to meet with the assistant headteachers and subject leaders in order to check the difference they are making in the school. The external review of pupil premium expenditure has been recently completed. Governors know how money is being spent but have yet to check the difference it is making to the achievement of eligible pupils.

External support

Following the previous monitoring inspection, the trust took immediate action to strengthen leadership. The interim headteachers and the staff from their schools, and the executive headteacher of the Greet Teaching School Alliance, have all contributed to the improvements in teaching, pupils' learning and pupils' behaviour. The trust fully acknowledges the need to appoint a permanent headteacher. However, it is continuing to find recruitment difficult.

The Birmingham Local Authority Resilience adviser continues to provide helpful advice and support in relation to keeping pupils safe. This support is helping the deputy headteacher to ensure that the school's procedures meet statutory requirements.