

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



23 November 2015

Ms G Augustin & Ms K Munden
Headteachers
Longshaw Primary School
Longshaw Road
Chingford
London
E4 6LH

Dear Ms Augustin & Ms Munden

Special measures monitoring inspection of Longshaw Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3–4 November 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2015.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the school effectiveness adviser and the Interim Director of School Standards from the local authority, and the school council. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Following the last inspection, the senior team was restructured and two senior members of staff were appointed. They included the deputy headteacher, with responsibility for pupil premium funding, who is also overseeing the mathematics curriculum until a coordinator is appointed to the substantive post. An assistant headteacher, with responsibility for special educational needs, was also appointed. The local authority was instrumental in brokering a partnership between Longshaw and Handsworth Primary School, a good school. The executive headteacher, a local

leader of education, provides strategic leadership. The partnership work includes senior and middle staff and members of the governing body sharing their expertise and skills with Longshaw staff.

Three members of staff, who taught classes in Years 1, 3 and 6, have left the school. All have been replaced by long-term experienced supply teachers. Senior leaders, including the governing body, have not made permanent appointments to these positions because they are intent on seeking and appointing experienced and good practitioners. This includes appointing leaders to coordinate mathematics and science.

The governing body was reconstituted and a new Chair of the Governing Body is in place.

The school expects to convert to an academy in January 2016 under the sponsorship of The Silver Birch Academy Trust. The academy order has been issued.

The school is undergoing refurbishment, which is expected to be completed by the end of the current term.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You and other senior and middle leaders have been very well supported by the executive headteacher. Since the inspection, the strong partnership work has propelled the school to move forward at a quick pace. The school has confronted the reality of failure head-on and staff have shown commitment and determination to improve outcomes for pupils. You have begun the process of change by making clear what is expected of all staff to develop teaching. You have been well supported by other senior and middle leaders.

Senior leaders have drawn on the expertise and experience of seasoned practitioners at Handsworth Primary School to develop the new vision of high expectations for all pupils. The school-to-school support has led to leaders taking an uncompromising stance on developing teaching. They have also introduced new systems to hold staff accountable for pupils' achievement. Better systems have been introduced to provide support for staff, track pupils' progress, and moderate assessment. They have also helped to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance, and develop all aspects of leadership. Discussions with the local authority, governors and middle leaders support the view that the school is now improving and is well supported by parents. The governing body has been strengthened and, although new, is well established.

Governors are experienced and bring with them specific skills in education, personnel, financial management and safeguarding. They have made very good use of the expertise of governors at Handsworth Primary School to remodel the committees and hold the school to account. They have reduced the myriad

committees to two: teaching and resources. This has increased their capacity and their focus to hold senior leaders to account for the school's effectiveness. Governors have acted in a timely manner to commission the external review and to act swiftly on the recommendations. They are active and seek out information. They check on how well the school is achieving and ensure that improvements are not hindered in any way; they also have a visible presence in the school. As a result, governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

All of this has meant that governors have worked well with the senior leaders to bring about change, what staff referred to as a 'sea change'. Leaders and governors have gained the support of staff and parents with ease and are showing flair to improve outcomes and change the status of the school because:

- communication has been consistent, clear, open and frequent. Senior leaders seek feedback and listen, as they are intent on improving pupils' lives and futures
- new systems of accountability have increased staff understanding of assessment information. Staff are now clear about the needs of different group of pupils, in particular the disadvantaged groups, including looked after children
- policies are being updated and a rolling programme is in place. Planned training on the threats of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation is organised for staff and governors
- leaders are developing teaching well; although there is more to do, staff are increasingly more skilled at using assessment accurately. Much has also been done to improve marking. Good quality training and development for all staff and leaders is contributing to them managing and sustaining change
- there is a sharp focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The swift response to reviewing the pupil premium internally and externally has led to major improvements. Outcomes are now consistently monitored and evaluated. The appointment of pupil premium champions has generated more attention to detail, and staff are now held more to account. As a result, there is no hiding place for staff
- leaders consistently measure the impact of change and evaluate outcomes against pupils' starting points. As a result of comparing outcomes with internal information, similar schools and national results, staff are increasingly aware that they are liable for pupils' progress and are required to provide answers when they are not doing as well as they could.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school is taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Waltham Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2015

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically good or better, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve and provide challenging work
 - feedback provides pupils with opportunities to extend their learning and deepen their understanding
 - teachers develop their assessment and questioning skills, so that pupils are supported to make more rapid progress, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Raise pupils' achievement across the school by making sure that:
 - leaders analyse assessment information so that they are aware of the performance of different groups of pupils
 - the gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others in school, and nationally, is closed
 - more-able pupils are challenged so that they achieve what they are capable of
 - pupils' handwriting and presentation improve rapidly.
- Increase the impact of leaders, including governors, by ensuring that:
 - governors develop the necessary skills to be able to hold the school to account effectively
 - there is sufficient capacity within the leadership team to provide support and guidance to improve the quality of teaching rapidly
 - middle leaders develop the skills needed to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - leaders ensure that the school's behaviour policy is applied consistently to eradicate low-level disruption
 - the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is monitored closely.

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 to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 3–4 November 2015

Outcomes for pupils

Longshaw pupils are keen learners. Book scrutiny, lessons seen and discussions with them confirm that they are enthusiastic about their learning and would welcome more challenging work, including homework. Some of the most-able pupils indicated that they 'fly through the work'. During lessons seen, pupils were responsive and focused at all times on listening to their teachers and applying the taught skills. Pupils are very clear about the approaches teachers use that contribute to their learning, in particular demonstrations, games and using memorable fun approaches to encourage learning. For example, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils quickly mastered a range of phonics skills (the sounds letters represent) and correct intonation when the class teacher used different pitches to emphasise meaning.

Progress in lessons is steady rather than rapid because teachers have not fully captured pupils' appetite for learning; that spark for learning has yet to be fired and released.

During the inspection, all different groups of pupils were applying themselves to their work. This is linked to the way in which pupils are grouped and the different levels of support teaching assistants provide. However, not all teaching assistants are consistent in providing high level support throughout lessons.

Outcomes in early years in 2015 were the best over the last three years. The phonics checks at Year 1 were significantly above the national average. Standards in Key Stage 1 were sustained and were significantly above the national average, with more pupils than in the last three years reaching the higher levels. At Key Stage 2, the school met the government's floor standards for primary schools, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Outcomes were better in mathematics, in particular. For the first time in three years, the proportion of pupils reaching the highest possible level in mathematics was significantly above average. Nevertheless, outcomes in writing were below the standard expected nationally. Disadvantaged pupils achieved as well as their peers. However, pupils' rates of progress were significantly below average, and particularly in writing.

Senior leaders have not wasted time in addressing the identified weaknesses in all subjects, particularly in reading and writing. The leadership team have also attended to the performance of different groups of pupils, for example, the most able, disadvantaged pupils and boys. New reading and writing resources to appeal to pupils' interests have been introduced. There is an increased emphasis on developing writing skills through encouraging pupils to read widely and record their views in personal journals. Classrooms are using 'writing walls' as a reference point for pupils. For example, in early years, the learning environment provides many opportunities for children to write their names, simple words and sentences in

preparation for progressing to Key Stage 1. This includes teachers planning discrete taught sessions on phonics skills. The impact of this work was evident in the much-improved results in 2015. Across the school, writing is seen as a cross-curricular activity, and there is also emphasis on routinely teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling, handwriting and presentation skills.

Although changes have been made, scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that there are basic gaps in pupils' knowledge and they are not applying the taught skills to their written work accurately. The process of writing is not reinforced well to help pupils spot and correct basic mistakes and make further improvements when editing their work. Pupils do not all have a wide vocabulary and neither do they all use the dictionary confidently. In addition, teachers are not consistent in correcting mistakes pupils make. Feedback is too often brief and pupils don't correct their mistakes.

A cursive handwriting style has been introduced but work in pupils' books does not indicate that it is being implemented rigorously. The policy is not reinforced and pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise 'Longshaw handwriting'. As a result, pupils' presentation skills and pride in their work are uneven.

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have worked effectively with Handsworth Primary School to work out their preferred approach to assessing pupils' work. The approach is being finalised and has given staff a good handle on using assessment to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Monitoring is more robust and teachers are regularly being held to account. This is enabling teachers to make decisions about developing plans to tackle weaknesses in pupils' work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers have responded very well to the training and development to equip them to accelerate pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is now much better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Senior leaders, supported by the local authority, have given very clear guidelines on what features are always expected and are linked to the National Teaching Standards. There is now more emphasis on pupils making and exceeding the progress expected nationally. Observations and feedback to staff are therefore routine; support plans are used to improve practice quickly. Joint planning and sharing of good practice internally, and through visits to the partner school and outstanding schools locally and further afield, have increased the teachers' understanding of how they can stretch pupils.

Extensive internal and external reviews of teaching confirm that teaching is improving at a faster pace. Nevertheless, the quality of work in pupils' books indicates that while teaching is much better, there is more to do to ensure consistency in addressing identified weaknesses and stimulating pupils to make rapid progress. Teachers have good classroom management skills and established

routines. As a result, pupils know expectations of work and behaviour. Questioning skills have been tackled and further training is planned. As a result, staff are more adept at developing pupils' thinking. Pupils engage well with their learning, delving into topics of interest. This was seen when Year 4 pupils researched volcanoes. However, teachers do not all share high expectations of pupils having in-depth knowledge about their work, developing a wide vocabulary, and using talk confidently to explore their work. This falls short when the pace of lessons is either too quick or there is not enough supervision to make sure pupils understand, and are able to record accurately, what they have learned.

For example, pupils worked on grammar, vocabulary and spelling during guided reading, but were often unclear about using and applying the technical features accurately.

The quality of marking is improving and the policy is in the process of being revised. However, teachers do not consistently give detailed comments or carefully mark the content and ensure pupils act upon their advice.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

During the inspection, behaviour in lessons and around the school was never less than good. Discussion with the school council confirmed that generally behaviour is much improved, even though there might be misgivings when a few pupils with behavioural difficulties disrupt their learning. Pupils know and understand the new behaviour policy and the consequences if behaviour is unacceptable. As at the last inspection, pupils feel safe and know about the different types of bullying. They are clear that there is always an adult they can turn to if they need support and help.

Attendance at 96% is just above average for primary schools. This is a vast improvement since the previous inspection. Persistent absence is now in line with or lower than the national average. This is as a result of effective work with the education welfare officer, support and help for parents and first day calling. The school has also taken robust action, such as legal procedures, when necessary. Few exclusions have taken place since the last inspection. Close work with external agencies ensures that pupils can attend school regularly and difficulties do not escalate. Partnership work with alternative providers ensures that pupils who transfer into or out of the school can settle in with personalised support plans. Pupils work very well together and relish their roles as ambassadors for their school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteachers and other senior and middle leaders work very well together as a team. They have clarified the vision for improving the school and have used research and reviews well to drive change. As a result, they have maintained a relentless focus on developing teaching, by providing a supportive mentoring system for

teachers whose teaching requires improvement. Where necessary, a few staff have moved on.

The school has prepared a detailed improvement plan, which targets the right areas to develop the quality of provision for pupils and improve their outcomes. Senior leaders are more focused on pupils' learning and, as a result, teachers have a clear understanding of how well individuals and groups are performing. They have begun to make good use of the robust systems in place to track pupils' progress to identify potential underachievement early and develop personalised action plans. Most importantly, the emphasis is on high-quality teaching rather than taking pupils out for extra help. Senior leaders provide clear feedback on teaching and use their evaluation to identify further changes to teaching and learning

The school has now developed good systems to brief the governing body and involve them in evaluating the school improvement plan. As a result, governors are well briefed about the strengths and weaknesses. The two committees are used very well to monitor and evaluate the school's work and to hold the leadership team accountable for the school's effectiveness. The link governors for each subject area have begun to use their expertise very well to gather and analyse information about different aspects of the school's work, such as safeguarding, the pupil premium and writing.

External support

The local authority's persistent and hands-on approach has contributed very well to strengthening and developing the school's capacity to sustain improvement. The local authority has actively brokered the partnership with Handsworth Primary School, strengthened the governing body and provided training and support for leaders, in particular middle leaders and the governing body. These direct contributions have enabled the leadership team to press ahead with the planned changes. Leaders have benefited from the local authority's steer and support, primarily because they have been able to maintain their focus on school improvement without being diverted by the rapid changes to the school's status. The local authority's support is linked to challenging leaders through regular progress and strategic meetings to demonstrate how well they are developing the actions outlined in the action plans.

While the local authority is prepared to step back, the school and proposed sponsor have agreed in principle to maintain links with the local authority, thus ensuring continuity and sustainability.