

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

16 March 2016

Mrs Emma Potts
Prudhoe Adderlane First School
Broomhill Road
Prudhoe
NE42 5HX

Dear Mrs Potts

Special measures monitoring inspection of Prudhoe Adderlane First School

Following my visit to your school on 1 and 2 March, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2015.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Executive Director of Wellbeing and Community Health Service for Northumberland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching in all key stages, particularly in writing and mathematics, so that it is consistently good in order to raise achievement rapidly, by:
 - assessing what pupils can do accurately and using this information to set work which enables pupils to make rapid progress in their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length about topics which excite them
 - ensuring that pupils apply their mathematics knowledge through problem-solving and develop their ability to explain their reasoning
 - making sure that teachers and teaching assistants use questioning to challenge pupils to think deeply about their learning
 - increasing opportunities in the Nursery and Reception classes for children to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics so that more reach and exceed the early learning goals in these areas
 - taking immediate action to improve pupils' attitudes to learning by reducing their reliance on adult support and encouraging them to take more personal responsibility for improving their work
 - improving pupils' handwriting and the pride they take in the presentation of their work.

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - developing a structure of leadership to support the newly appointed headteacher so that responsibility is shared for managing the performance of teachers
 - improving the skills of leaders at all levels so that they can judge the quality of teaching over time accurately and make rapid improvements to teaching
 - ensuring that improvement-planning includes sharply-focused, measurable targets which can be monitored and evaluated by all leaders, including governors
 - setting ambitious targets for pupils' achievement which ensure that all pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able make faster progress to reach their full potential
 - improving systems to raise the attendance of all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, to at least the national average
 - conducting an external review of pupil premium funding to ensure that the effectiveness of spending is evaluated robustly and that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is accelerated
 - conducting an external review of governance to ensure that the governing body has the necessary skills to challenge the school's performance and hold leaders to account.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 1 and 2 February 2016

Evidence

The lead inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the seconded assistant headteacher, the subject leaders for English and mathematics, four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector also spoke by telephone to the local authority primary and early years commissioner. The inspector completed observations in six lessons and completed a writing work book scrutiny alongside the headteacher. Pupils' views about attitudes to learning and marking were gathered through discussions in lessons.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has seconded an assistant headteacher from a local good school. One teacher has been appointed to work in Year 1. Two teachers have left the school. There is a new Chair of the Governing Body.

Outcomes for pupils

The school has completed a range of assessments, including the use of standardised tests, to begin to establish a more accurate picture of pupils' attainment. Information about children's achievement in the early years is now on a firmer footing, following a review by the assistant headteacher and the local authority's early years consultant.

The school's assessment information shows that the majority of pupils are presently working below the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there is some early evidence in most classes that increasing proportions of pupils are working at levels closer to that expected for their age. There is still work to be done to sharpen the focus on accelerating pupils' progress now that the systems for recording pupils' attainment are improving. Pupil progress meetings are too informal and do not involve the necessary rigour of senior and subject leaders holding teachers accountable for pupils' progress.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The seconded assistant headteacher is beginning to improve the quality of teaching and provision in the Reception and Nursery classes. As a result, the teaching in the early years is increasingly more purposeful and children are becoming more engaged in their learning. Approaches to assessing children's progress have been sharpened. The school now has a firmer understanding of children's current level of

achievement and their next steps in learning. The school has set relevant targets for children's achievement by the end of the year. Appropriate actions which aim to address children's gaps in learning and to ensure that these targets are met are starting to be introduced. Provision for learning in the early years outdoors area is underdeveloped. The opportunities to improve children's reading, writing and mathematics learning are not strong enough in this area of the school.

Phonics (sounds that letters make) teaching is more effectively structured and pupils are working in groups that are organised to match their needs. Reception and Nursery children now have an improving range of learning opportunities which are starting to increase their phonics and communication skills. Teaching interventions to provide catch-up or close gaps in their learning are in place. Checking to measure the difference this is making to children's learning is improving.

Opportunities to write at length and about topics which interest pupils are increasing. For example, children in Reception were proud to share their animal riddles and older pupils were writing instructions about how to set up a chicken brooder box in class. On occasions, pupils are not given enough opportunity to work independently in lessons. Sometimes the most-able pupils have too detailed a framework of support and in some writing lessons, pupils are left with too short a time to respond to the teaching which has taken place. As a result, pupils do not get the chance to fully apply the teaching and to demonstrate their individual level of learning.

The quality of handwriting in pupils' written work is showing strong signs of improvement. This is because handwriting is taught regularly and teachers' own handwriting in marking and during lessons provide effective models for pupils. Pupils are clear about the expectations for handwriting and try hard to produce this. Effective checking on handwriting standards by the English subject leader has helped to ensure that this improvement is beginning to be used to better effect across the school.

The quality of teachers' questioning is still too variable. As a result, in some lessons pupils' learning is not sufficiently deepened or prior learning is not well reinforced. Since the last monitoring visit, the headteacher and subject leaders have checked for the impact of teachers' questioning on learning and provided individual feedback for staff. However, some of this feedback in the subject leaders' reports is not specific enough to move the quality of questioning forward at the required pace.

Teachers are following the school's policy of pink and green highlighting when marking books. Pupils generally understand this approach and in the main respond positively to make improvements to their work. Some comments in marking are not

specific enough in relation to the pupil learning demonstrated or in identifying the next steps for learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

There has been progress in improving pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils are responding well to the clearer expectations set by teachers. On occasions where teachers do not give guidance on the amount of learning to be demonstrated in the time available, some pupils do not fully apply themselves during individual tasks. Some pupils are still overly reliant on support from the teacher and the development of independent learning attitudes remains an aspect for development.

In the early years, where higher expectations are now set, children engage well with both adult-led activities and with the learning opportunities provided within the classroom. Better-established routines are resulting in children moving more sensibly around the school and tidying away at the end of sessions. This is helping to make more effective use of time for learning and developing children's independence.

The school is improving systems to raise the profile of good attendance. Improved communications with parents and more coordinated work with the school's education welfare officer are helping to provide a more systematic approach to reducing pupil absence. Assemblies and displays which celebrate high levels of attendance reinforce the importance of good attendance with parents and pupils. Attendance levels, when compared to a similar period last year, are improving for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. There is still further work to be done to achieve the school's targets in this area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders are beginning to address the inadequacies which placed the school into special measures. Recent changes to leadership and governance arrangements have improved leadership capacity. The new Chair of the Governing body has begun to provide a more appropriate level of challenge for the headteacher. Governors now check more regularly on the progress made in addressing the school's priorities. The secondment of an assistant headteacher has provided more effective leadership in the early years and is beginning to positively influence teaching practice in other areas of the school.

The school's improvement plan is now fit for purpose. The headteacher and seconded assistant headteacher have worked with guidance from the local authority school improvement partner to improve the plan's shortcomings identified at the last monitoring visit. The plan has more clear timescales and better defined reporting arrangements. More realistic targets based on the pupils' achievement data have

been added. The school would benefit from ensuring that the school development plan and English and mathematics action plans are more directly matched.

The headteacher is continuing to develop her leadership and management skills with support from a headteacher mentor from a local school. She has a better view of the quality of teaching and learning across the school through regular observations in lessons, workbook scrutinies and reviews of pupils' progress. At present the information gleaned from these checks is not collated tightly enough to give a clear view of the quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics.

The headteacher and governors have begun to take firmer action where the quality of teaching needs to improve and steps have been taken, addressing some of the very weakest teaching in the school. Further training for teachers, including support from good and outstanding schools, is in place where the quality of teaching is still not strong enough. This is starting to strengthen the quality of teaching although there is still further work to done.

The English and mathematics subject leaders are beginning to develop into their leadership roles. Increased time for leadership responsibilities is allowing them to check more regularly on the impact of school improvement actions. Training and support has been provided to help improve both their abilities to lead and check developments in their subjects. This training has had a variable impact on their leadership skills. Presently, there is no clear plan of subject leadership development which matches their needs and the priorities for the school.

The plans following the external reviews of governance and the use of pupil premium continue to be implemented. The headteacher and a local authority school improvement partner regularly check the implementation and impact of the pupil premium action plan.

External support

The school has benefited from support from the local authority and a headteacher mentor from a local school. This is beginning to develop the leadership skills of the headteacher. St Aidan's Church of England Primary and Mickley First Schools are providing leadership training for subject leaders and opportunities for staff to observe teaching. These school links have provided subject leaders with some understanding of their role but have not yet made a substantial difference to the quality of teaching.