

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



4 April 2016

Mrs Anne McCarthy  
Interim Headteacher  
Burrowmoor Primary School  
Burrowmoor Road  
March  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 9RP

Dear Mrs McCarthy

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Burrowmoor Primary School**

Following my visit with Olive Millington, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 14 and 15 March 2016, 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 that have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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:

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

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2015**

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to good or better by:
  - planning work that provides the right level of challenge
  - giving pupils clear guidance through feedback about how to improve their work
  - making better use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning
  - giving the teaching of writing a stronger focus in the Reception year.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring all staff have high expectations for pupils
  - improving the rigour of checks on teaching and learning to identify and tackle weaknesses promptly
  - improving the effectiveness of all staff with allocated responsibilities and the governing body, in monitoring provision and securing the necessary improvement
  - making better use of the pupil premium to provide the right support for disadvantaged pupils and then checking the effect of this support more closely.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and the presentation of their work by:
  - ensuring that all adults manage behaviour consistently well in lessons and at playtimes
  - helping pupils understand the importance of good behaviour
  - ensuring that pupils always try hard and present their work neatly.

External reviews of governance and the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 14 March 2016 to 15 March 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, the executive headteacher, two members of the governing body, two representatives of the sponsor trust, senior leaders, other teachers and pupils. Visits were made to all classes, which included an examination of some of the pupil's work.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, an interim headteacher has been appointed. Two temporary teachers are currently in post and one teacher is on maternity leave. A number of teaching assistants have left the school.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The interim headteacher has strengthened leadership considerably. She has been explicit in making sure that other leaders and teachers fully understand what is expected of them. Leaders at other levels have risen to the challenge. They have been given effective support and guidance so that they are now taking action to improve teaching and learning that is resulting in some improvements to teaching. One example of the success of their work is that learning is more purposeful because school leaders have ensured that teachers make the intentions of the lesson clear to pupils.

The executive headteacher has led important changes to the culture of the school. In the past, there was a resistance to change and the need for it. The executive headteacher has made quite clear the importance of higher expectations of teaching and outcomes for pupils and has fostered a much more productive attitude among staff, who now see school improvement as a shared responsibility.

Middle and senior leaders have yet to overcome the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school, which means that teaching remains inadequate. The difference between the leadership responsibilities of assistant headteachers and phase leaders is not clear enough. For example, a phase leader and assistant headteacher have similar responsibilities for teaching and learning. Some leaders are proving more effective at securing better teaching and learning because they are already good practitioners. Others are not as effective, as they work to improve the teaching of their team as well as trying to strengthen their own practice.

Since the last monitoring inspection, procedures for the management of performance have been implemented. The executive headteacher has modelled good practice to other leaders who have in turn taken the responsibility for the

appraisal of teachers. Teachers have regular opportunities for training and to observe good practice in other schools. Leaders have instilled the expectation that as a result of this training and support, teachers must improve their practice in lessons. Checks on the quality of teaching and the work in books are regular and are having increasing impact on improving teaching and learning.

Suitable procedures have been established to check pupils' progress and assess their achievement. However, at the moment, the information only gives an indication of progress because some teachers are not good enough at assessing and moderating pupils' achievements. In the early years, Year 6 and Year 2, the data is more reliable as the teachers are more skilled at assessment.

Governance continues to grow in strength. Governor meetings are becoming an established forum for checking the work of leaders and holding them to account for the actions they are taking towards the removal of special measures. Governors demonstrate a good understanding of the procedures for strengthening teaching and learning and also of where further improvements are needed, for example gaining a better understanding of the impact of the use of pupil premium funding and how it needs to be more effective.

The management of teaching assistants has become more purposeful with the transference of leadership responsibility to the middle phase leaders. However, it remains unclear what the impact on learning is of this large workforce. For example, school leaders are not clear about the impact of funding to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium. A large majority of this money funds the work of the teaching assistants. The special needs coordinator checks the quality of interventions and the work that teaching assistants do with individual pupils, but this does not contribute to an understanding by school leaders of the impact of these extra activities on pupils' outcomes overall.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Teachers across the school are trying hard to improve their teaching. They demonstrate a resilient determination to improve. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across classes and subjects remain. In some classes, such as a Year 2 class and in Year 6 classes, progress in writing and mathematics is good because the teachers plan work that is pitched at the right level for many of the pupils, demonstrating a sound subject knowledge. In other classes, in both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils do not make as much progress because the teaching remains mediocre.

Teaching and the use of assessment in the early years has strengthened, as has the leadership. Teachers use information about children proficiently to prepare activities for them and to check what they have learned. Consequently, children in the Reception classes are making better progress than at the time of the last inspection. Teaching assistants ably lead activities and keep a careful check on the progress of individual children. They take full responsibility for the assessment of the children that they are responsible for and then carry out the activities planned

by teachers to develop children's skills. This is an example of effective team work that is resulting in much better outcomes for children.

A weakness that remains in the teaching in some classes, particularly in Years 1 and 5, is that teachers do not look closely enough at pupils' work to decide what they need to do next to improve. For example, in books, teachers use tick lists to cover aspects that pupils have included in their work. These often do not result in the next piece of writing showing any improvement because the teachers have not identified specifically what it is that pupils need to concentrate on to enhance the quality of their writing.

Aspects of mathematics, such as problem-solving and reasoning, are not taught well enough. In addition, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to prior learning when planning work in new mathematical topics. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their learning that make it more difficult for them to succeed when tackling new work. There are, however, some examples of effective teaching of problem-solving. In one Year 4 class, pupils relished an activity that involved solving problems. They worked together demonstrating a developing fluency with numbers, juggling subtraction, addition and doubling as they looked to finish a game of darts with a double.

Teaching assistants have a variable impact on learning. Some are effective in supporting pupils, for example in a Year 2 class pupils were supported by the teaching assistant, who questioned them proficiently to help them understand their work. Other teaching assistants are less effective. They do not check whether they need to intervene in what the pupil is doing or they do the work for them rather than encouraging them to use their own ideas. In some classes, they are less effective because the teacher has not prepared work that is at the correct level of difficulty for pupils.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

A positive improvement across the school is the better attitudes to learning that most pupils exhibit in lessons. They try hard to complete their work, they complete tasks cooperatively and they are eager to do well.

A concerted effort by the interim headteacher and class teachers, supported by the trust and the executive headteacher, has resulted in a rise in attendance, which is currently above average.

Pupils behave sensibly around the school. They enjoy being given responsibility and they are considerate to each other. Bullying remains rare. Pupils have a clear understanding of the rules for behaviour within the school and most stick to them.

There are a number of pupils that need careful management because their behaviour is very challenging. While teaching assistants ensure that they are safe and cared for, it is unclear whether the plans in place to support these pupils are resulting in better self-management of their behaviour.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

Assessment information and the work in books shows that progress in reading, writing and mathematics is accelerating at different rates across the school as teaching across the school improves. It is now more rapid in the early years than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 6 have maintained a good rate of progress. Across the rest of the school the acceleration in progress is dependent on the quality of teaching in each class. In Years 3 and 4, some groups of pupils are making better progress, but others, such as disadvantaged pupils and the most able, are not doing as well as they could. In one Year 2 class, pupils make good progress that is not replicated in the other class. In Years 1 and 5, the progress pupils make is slower than in other parts of the school as the teachers find it more difficult to make the necessary improvements to their teaching.

The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the others is not closing rapidly enough. The school provides many additional activities, but they are not having sufficient impact on narrowing the gap for this group.

Since the last monitoring inspection, teachers have tackled the untidy presentation in pupils' books and work is now presented more neatly. Handwriting still remains a weakness across the school. One reason for this is that pupils do not form their letters correctly because of weak teaching in the past. This is a barrier to forming a mature writing style that has yet to be overcome.

Some pupils are hampered in their development of numeracy skills because of gaps in their learning. For example, pupils were observed who were unable to complete addition calculations because they had not learned the strategies required to carry out the task.

Older pupils are learning to dance and to develop their physical education skills at a good pace because of the exciting lessons led by a specialist teacher from the local secondary school.

## **External support**

Since the last monitoring inspection, the trust has provided the school with more effective support to strengthen teaching and leadership. It identified a school leader with the required skills to take the interim headteacher post, which was of critical importance. Teachers have been able to visit other schools to see good practice, which leaders have ensured results in improvements to teaching, for example in the early years. Leaders from other schools have helped to support the evaluation of areas of weakness and have offered useful advice to shape the next steps, which has proved to be very helpful.