

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



19 May 2016

Joan Hobbs  
Headteacher  
Dubmire Primary School  
Britannia Terrace  
Fence Houses  
Houghton le Spring  
Tyne and Wear  
DH4 6HL

Dear Mrs Hobbs

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

Following my visit with Mary Lanovy-Taylor, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 10–11 May 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 school's recent section 5 inspection.

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

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

#### **Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plans are not fit for purpose.

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 director of children's services for Sunderland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Lithgow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, across the school including early years, in order to quickly increase the rate of pupils' progress and raise standards by:
  - raising expectations of how much pupils should learn and setting targets for this which are aspirational for pupils' achievement
  - sharpening the use of what is known about pupils' starting points to plan learning that develops their understanding and skills, and ensures good progress
  - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge and questioning skills through effective training
  - ensuring the school's policy for marking is fully implemented
  - setting higher expectations for pupils' handwriting and the general presentation of written work
  - eliminating low-level disruption by providing classroom tasks and activities that capture pupils' interest and sustain their concentration
  - embedding the recent changes to the curriculum and systems for checking pupils' progress and attainment.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, in order to improve the quality of teaching rapidly and raise standards, including in early years, by:
  - creating a culture in which high-quality education for all pupils is the top priority
  - setting expectations for pupils' learning and progress that match the current high aspirations in place for pupils' personal development
  - sharpening the procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - improving the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation at all levels, including external evaluations, those made by school leaders and those of the governing body
  - ensuring performance management is used well to improve the quality of teaching by holding staff to account for the effectiveness of their practice
  - improving the use of additional funding received for the pupil premium in order that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils, and ensuring that governors hold the school to account for this
  - increasing the level of challenge provided by the governing body to school leaders regarding the information and analysis it receives about the quality of teaching and the outcomes for pupils.

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 the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 10 to 11 May 2016**

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and middle leaders, members of the governing body including the chair and vice-chair, and a senior officer from the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. Inspectors evaluated the school's improvement plans, including English, mathematics and early years leaders' summary reports, and the school's system for checking pupil progress. Other documents were scrutinised including governing body minutes, local authority advisers' notes of visits, and the school's monitoring information. We also conducted a scrutiny of pupils' mathematics and English books, and spoke to pupils informally and during lessons.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, and following negotiations with the Department for Education, it has been agreed that Dubmire Primary School and Newbottle Academy will come together under the leadership of Aim High Academy Trust. One middle leader has left the school and a new leader with responsibility for English has started. A number of leaders are currently absent.

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

- School leaders have not identified clear actions which will improve teaching and learning at the rapid pace required. This is because the school's improvement plans have been developed alongside the local authority's statement of action, which is also not precise or focused enough to support those required improvements. In any case, systems to evaluate the impact are very unclear. As a result, actions have not had the impact needed, and leaders have not acted quickly enough.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are not focused on the amount of learning and progress pupils are making. This even applies when leaders observe lessons and look at pupils' work in their books. The weakness has been exacerbated because the local authority carries out its checks in the same way; with a lack of focus on learning and the impact of actions. Consequently, leaders, governors and the local authority do not currently have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching.
- You and your senior leaders have not had any support and training since the school was judged to require special measures in order to help you develop and sharpen your leadership skills and exit the special measures category in a timely fashion.
- Regular meetings with officers from the local authority, and meetings with your governing body, have not been challenging enough about monitoring and evaluating the impact of improvement actions.

- Officers from the local authority who have been supporting middle leaders, for example in early years, mathematics and English, have often given confusing messages to you and to teachers about the quality of learning in lessons. You recognised that some teachers were being given over-generous evaluations which were not accurate. This resulted in your staff being misinformed about their impact.
- A governance review was carried out soon after the previous inspection. As a result, an action plan was developed and the governing body reconstituted and a smaller governing body was put in place. However, these governors have not had any further development or training which is necessary to ensure they are strategically holding leaders to account. They fully recognise this and are very keen to rectify this immediately.
- An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding was carried out shortly after the previous inspection. However, it did not result in devising a strategic action plan to ensure that disadvantaged pupils catch up quickly. Consequently, attainment and progress gaps for those pupils have widened since the previous inspection. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- You and governors have implemented a new performance management policy, which ensures that pay is related the quality of teaching. The national teachers' standards now help structure your expectations of teachers' work and its impact on learning. However, this is a new development and has yet to make a difference.
- Plans are underway for Dubmire to become part of the Aim High Academy Trust. Information is available for parents on the school's website about this. It is expected that this will happen at some point during the autumn term, and there is a meeting planned for parents during the summer term.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning has not improved because leaders have not planned and monitored actions effectively. As a result, pupils are not making the rapid progress needed for them to catch up to where they should be.
- Teachers' expectations are still too low, which means that pupils are not being challenged enough. Furthermore, the most-able pupils find their work too easy, as teachers have not planned to meet their learning needs.
- There is a lack of urgency in classrooms. Lessons are regularly running over into other planned lessons. This means that some subjects are not getting sufficient learning time to ensure pupils develop their skills. For example, a phonics lesson in key stage 1 was still going on for 20 minutes after it should have ended and a different lesson started. Pupils were disengaged and off-task as the pace was not brisk or sharp enough to keep their attention.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has not improved. Support and training has been provided from the local authority; however, it was not monitored and evaluated carefully enough to measure if

it was successful or not. Consequently, weak subject knowledge, incorrect sounds and misuse of vocabulary on the part of teachers and teaching assistants were not identified and therefore not acted upon. Pupils are therefore confused and this is having a negative impact on their reading ability.

- Marking of pupils' work in books is inconsistent and is having a negligible impact on their learning.
- Teachers have received training to implement the mathematics 'mastery curriculum'. Evidence in books highlights that most teachers are giving pupils opportunities to develop their fluency and reasoning skills. However, teachers' expectations are too low; therefore pupils are not making the rapid progress required in this area.
- More recently, a new assessment and tracking system has been developed and implemented successfully by leaders to ensure that the progress pupils are making can now be checked carefully. This system ensures groups of learners, for example disadvantaged pupils, can be tracked more successfully, and actions to improve outcomes can be carefully planned.

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

- Generally, pupils are well behaved, respectful and calm around the school and outside due to high expectations from all staff about what is acceptable and appropriate. There are clear reward systems in place to which the pupils respond very positively.
- On the whole, behaviour in lessons is compliant, despite the poor quality of teaching. Pupils show levels of enthusiasm and engagement which are contrary to what would be expected given that they are often bored and unmotivated. During the inspection, there were some incidents of poor behaviour during lesson time. This was linked directly to the inadequate teaching, particularly in key stage 1.
- Records kept by you and your leaders about behaviour and bullying incidents are not thorough enough to ensure that repeated behaviour is identified and dealt with effectively. Consequences appear to be the same, irrespective of incident, which would indicate they are not working given the amount of times they are handed out to the same pupils. Leaders have plans in place to sharpen and tighten their behaviour monitoring systems through the purchase of new software.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

- Pupils are not catching up quickly enough because the quality of teaching is not improving at the pace required.
- Work in pupils' writing and mathematics books demonstrates that pupils do not have enough challenging work. This results in pupils making very little or no progress over time.

- The proportion of pupils who were working at age-related expectations during the autumn term in reading, writing and mathematics was very low. The school's own information indicates that there are now more pupils working at age-related expectations by the end of the spring term. Despite this, there are still insufficient pupils working at the expected levels in many classes.
- Currently, there are fewer disadvantaged pupils working at age-related expectations in comparison to their peers across most year groups, in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a similar picture for pupils with special educational needs and disability, and for boys. The gaps for these pupils has widened from the autumn term to the spring term.

### **External support**

- The local authority's support has been variable. They have provided effective support for leaders to implement the new assessment and tracking system. However, they have failed to provide enough challenge and support for you and your leaders to ensure you have the correct skills to drive forward the necessary improvements.
- The local authority has provided consultants to work with middle leaders. Their effectiveness has been limited due to over-generous messages given to staff and a lack of monitoring of the impact of their work, for example in phonics.
- Support from the headteacher of George Washington Primary School was brokered by the local authority to provide support for you and your leaders. Action taken so far has not focused on supporting the improvement of leadership and management at Dubmire Primary School. A package of support introduced to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Year 1 is not well adapted to meet the needs of pupils at Dubmire Primary School and, as a result, has hindered their readiness for entering Year 2 in September.