

Cambridge Education
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01223 578500
Direct F 01223 578501
risp.inspections@camb-ed.com



28th November 2008

Mrs M Vaissiere
Acting Headteacher
Buxton Primary School
Aylsham Road
Buxton
Norwich
NR10 5EZ

Dear Mrs Vaissiere,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Buxton Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 and 12 November, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Tricia Pritchard

H M Inspector

The letter should be copied as follows to the following:

- Appropriate authority - chair of governors/Interim Executive Board (IEB)/ Proprietor – in independent schools
- LA – except for independent special schools and academies
- Secretary of State (i.e. Nina Curley at the DCSF nina.curley@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk and CausingConcern.schools@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk) and the specialist schools section
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the LA - where appropriate
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- Learning and Skills Council where the sixth form is deemed to be inadequate.

Special measures: monitoring of Buxton Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 11 and 12 November 2008

Evidence

HMI observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, teaching staff, pupils, the chair of the interim executive board and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, there have been changes in staffing and in class organisation. At the end of the summer term, the acting headteacher and three teachers left. In September, a new acting headteacher was appointed together with a county school improvement support teacher from the LA. The number of classes was reduced from five to four. Currently, there is a Reception class, a Year 1/2 class, a Year 3/4 class with seven Year 5 pupils, and a class of Year 5 and 6 pupils. Two teachers share the teaching of pupils in Year 3 and Year 4, one of whom is on a temporary contract until the end of the autumn term. There are 92 pupils on roll.

Achievement and standards

Attainment on entry into the Reception class is in line or above age-related expectations in most areas of learning. This year, the children's attitudes to learning and their oral communication skills are particularly good. Their writing skills are less well developed than their reading skills but this pattern is not unusual.

Throughout the children's time in the Reception class, their progress against the early learning goals is assessed at regular intervals. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the school aims to have detailed individual profiles on each child and an overall summary of the attainment of all the children in the class. Last year, however, the individual records went astray, although the overall summary is still available. The summary results show that the class as a whole were working well within the early learning goals at the end of the year.

There were also problems with recording the attainment and progress of Year 1 pupils at the end of last summer term. It is not clear whether these pupils, who are now in Year 2, were routinely assessed by the teacher since no data is available. These shortcomings are being addressed. The tracking of pupils' progress and the presentation of the data have improved significantly this term. The new Key Stage 1 teacher acted promptly to assess pupils early on in the autumn term so that she had reliable evidence about their starting points at the beginning of the school year.

Since the last monitoring visit, national data on the performance of Year 2 pupils in English and mathematics in the summer term of 2008 has become available. The data confirms that the pupils did not do as well overall as Year 2 pupils in any of the

previous four years. Their attainment was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results were slightly higher in mathematics than those of 2007, but reading scores fell considerably. Girls did better than boys in all subjects. Those with additional learning needs did not do as well as pupils in other schools. However, with only seven pupils in Year 2, the cohort was small and this factor needs to be taken into account when interpreting results. Currently, pupils in both Year 1 and Year 2 are making at least satisfactory progress because they are being taught well. This marks an improvement since the last inspection visit.

In Year 6, the results of the end-of-Key Stage 2 assessments in 2008, also present a declining picture. The pupils attained levels in English, mathematics and science which were below the national average and the lowest for five years. Throughout Key Stage 2, they made inadequate progress. Their performance in writing was exceptionally low and this contributed to a significant drop in English standards compared with 2007. Out of 26 pupils, there was only one higher attaining pupil in English and four higher attaining pupils in mathematics; these factors also contributed to the lower overall average points score. However, there was a marked improvement in science results in comparison with those of the previous year.

Pupils currently in Years 4, 5 and 6 were also assessed in English, mathematics and science at the end of the summer term. Again, their results showed that standards were below the national average and progress was inadequate, particularly in writing. Since then, the picture has improved. In the lessons observed during the monitoring visit, most pupils made at least satisfactory progress. However, on scrutinising pupils' books, not all pupils are finishing their work and, in particular, higher attaining pupils could do better.

Leaders are well aware of what the school needs to do to raise attainment. There are clear signs of improvement and accelerated progress but pupils have a lot of ground to cover in a short time if they are to achieve standards which are closer to the national average than previously. On the next monitoring visit, further evidence will be sought of the positive impact of the better teaching and the improved assessment arrangements over a longer period. It was too early to judge their full impact on this monitoring visit.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- use the available data more effectively to identify what is needed to improve the rate of pupils' progress and raise standards in English, mathematics and science – inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being is satisfactory. Most pupils show good attitudes to learning and this has improved since the previous monitoring visit. They enjoy their lessons and the majority take a pride in their work. Behaviour is good and children relate well to their peers and other adults. Attendance is in line with the

national average. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the advantages of eating healthily and are keen to participate in after-school activities. However, due to weak standards in literacy and numeracy, they are not yet as well prepared for their future economic well being as they might be.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved this term with new staffing and class arrangements. The acting headteacher has concentrated on improving literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and has rightly steered away from introducing new curriculum initiatives in Key Stage 2. In the EYFS and Key Stage 1, there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Phonics is taught every day and this is improving their reading and writing.

The majority of lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Planning for the different ability and age-ranges within each class has improved but there is scope for higher attaining pupils to be set more challenging work in some lessons. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with good features. It is more inconsistent in the job share class where the quality of pupils' written work is variable.

There is now more evidence of a common approach to teaching and learning across year groups. In the teaching of writing, for example, teachers expose pupils to good quality texts in order to extend their vocabulary and their understanding of the features of good writing. However, not all pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise these writing skills in other subjects, such as in science.

Teacher assessments and tracking are more accurate than previously and where pupils are identified as falling behind, they are targeted to attend intervention groups. All pupils are set targets which are displayed on classroom walls. They show a growing understanding of these targets but marking does not always give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve. Increasingly, however, they are involved in self-assessing their own work and this is good practice.

All requirements for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their wellbeing are securely in place.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- give pupils greater understanding of their targets and involve them consistently in recording and checking their own progress – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

In September, the LA seconded an acting headteacher, with experience of leading schools in special measures. In a short time, she has created a good team ethos amongst staff, pupils and parents. She has taught every class and is adopting a

rigorous approach to monitoring teaching and learning. This is having a positive impact on accelerating pupils' progress.

At present, subject leaders are required to take a lead in moderating the assessment of pupils' work. This is a good move and has given teachers more confidence in assessing pupils' progress accurately and agreeing levels of attainment. Subject leaders are also involved in scrutinising pupils' work. Their reports are brief but incorporate open and honest feedback on their findings. Staff have also made a satisfactory start on interpreting pupil performance data but the analysis is not as sharp as it could be. Teachers are not yet fully aware of how to use data to explore how different groups of pupils are performing.

Underperformance in the classroom is being tackled successfully through targeted professional development. No inadequate teaching was observed on this inspection visit. Professional development activities include sessions on the teaching of writing and a programme for teaching assistants to equip them with further skills to guide pupils' learning.

The interim executive board continues to fulfil its role efficiently and effectively. It is now preparing to hand over to a new governing body. The headteacher and board members have a secure knowledge and understanding of the school's priorities and particularly of the need to raise standards. They are taking a strategic view of long term development and considering a range of sensible options for the future permanent leadership of the school. The school is demonstrating that it is moving forward and responding to the issues raised during the previous inspection visits and through its own self evaluation of provision.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve strategic leadership and management at all levels so that responsibilities and accountability of all involved are clearly defined and there are systems to evaluate the impact of these – satisfactory.
- bring greater rigour into monitoring teaching and learning to address identified weaknesses - good.

External support

The LA has offered considerable support by seconding an experienced headteacher and a county school improvement teacher to tackle areas of underperformance in the school and to model good practice. These appointments are contributing to the school moving forward. In addition, consultants have visited to evaluate provision and provide valuable professional development support for staff. The LA is determined to see the school succeed. The school improvement partner knows the school well and is targeting support in the areas where it is most needed.

Priorities for further improvement

- raise standards in writing
- conduct a sharper analysis of pupil performance data in order to gain information on the attainment of different groups of pupils and to identify where there is underperformance.

Please email this letter to the Ofsted email postbox for the region in which the school is based: SouthSIQA@ofsted.gov.uk or North_SIQA@ofsted.gov.uk or Midlands_SIQA@ofsted.gov.uk for quality assurance.

File Name

The filename should be: D school name, visit number (e.g. D Schoolname 2 SM)

Once the school has had 24 hours to report any factual inaccuracies, the post-visit letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Appropriate authority - chair of governors/Interim Executive Board (IEB)/ Proprietor – in independent schools
- LA – except for independent special schools and academies
- Secretary of State (i.e. Nina Curley at the DCSF nina.curley@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk and CausingConcern.schools@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk) and the specialist schools section
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the LA - where appropriate
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- Learning and Skills Council where the sixth form is deemed to be inadequate.

The letters should also be copied electronically to:

each member of the inspection team,

the regional ADM: SI

the regional HMI with responsibility for special measures [Sara Morrissey-North; Andrew Cook-Midlands; Linda McGill-South]

the LMI schools for the LA in which the school is located

Siobhan.Sherlock@ofsted.gov.uk

A copy with editing marked up should be forwarded to the:

Lead inspector

regional SIQA. post box