

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

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



20 November 2008

Mr K McCabe
The Headteacher
Jervoise Junior and Infant School
Jervoise Road
Weoley Castle
Birmingham
West Midlands
B29 5QU

Dear Mr McCabe

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Jervoise Junior and Infant School

Following my visit with Lois Furness, Additional Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 November 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in May 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Cartwright".

Brian Cartwright
H M Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Jervoise Junior and Infant School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 November 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the executive headteacher, other school managers, representatives of the local authority, and the chair of governors.

Context

A new executive headteacher directly employed by the local authority took charge in September 2008. The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher at the time of the previous inspection have left the school. The previous involvement of a local consultant headteacher ended in July 2008. A new acting deputy headteacher has been seconded from the local authority on a temporary basis. A new chair of governors was appointed from September 2008. There are two teachers on temporary contracts.

Achievement and standards

Provisional results for 2008 Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 national assessments and tests are no better than the very low standards recorded in 2007. Standards of work seen during this visit are still very low. The new headteacher and deputy have identified inconsistencies in previous assessments of standards and progress carried out by teachers. They have begun to introduce more robust practices for the moderation of teachers' assessments and to establish more reliable measures of pupils' progress. They have also tried to raise expectations of both teachers and pupils by asking teachers to display examples of high quality work in classrooms. However, some staff are describing mediocre quality work as 'very good', and one of the displayed examples contained errors and corrections. Pupils continue to underachieve, and expectations of what constitutes good work remain too low, in all subjects.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science – inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

This was not a focus for this monitoring visit, although inspectors noted that the behaviour of pupils is satisfactory in lessons and around the school. Pupils are lively and keen to talk about their work. Pupils of all ages are very willing to learn. One Reception class pupil insisted to a friend that he did not want any help, thank you, because he wanted to do the writing work all by himself. Pupils remain patient in

most lessons, even when it is taking a long time for them to begin work on the main substance of the lesson. The school keeps careful records of behaviour issues. These records do not always clearly indicate that the incident has been formally resolved.

Quality of provision

Inspectors observed all the teachers twice. Many of the lessons were inadequate, primarily because of weaknesses in lesson planning. Too many lesson plans did not address the very wide range of abilities or previous knowledge of pupils, resulting in all pupils attempting the same task. Too many lessons involved extended 'class discussion' before pupils began their individual work. These discussions often involved only one or two pupils, with the others waiting to contribute. This long preamble to the lesson's main learning task meant that the pace of learning was too slow. The delay sometimes leads to frustration and low level disruption, which then triggers a further delay as the teacher becomes sidetracked into managing classroom discipline. Even when trying to establish a calm lesson environment, too many examples were seen of teachers failing to establish complete silence when they asked for it. In some lessons, teachers were not operating a consistent policy of only accepting contributions from pupils who had raised their hand. This could lead to sanctions for some pupils, but not all. Teachers too readily accepted the first 'right' answer they heard, rather than checking if more pupils agreed with the first suggestion. Inspectors also identified one or two examples of weak subject knowledge, resulting in pupils being taught incorrect information or methods.

There are some examples of good lesson plans, and of good teaching based on those plans. In these cases, different tasks and resources for different ability groups of pupils were set out clearly. The discussion and short activity to start the lesson were brief and energetic, with a short explanation of what pupils should do. The medium term day-by-day lesson plans reflected this use of different tasks for different abilities. These plans also showed evidence of the teacher and teaching assistants subsequently evaluating what had worked and what had not, with different pupils. However, it was less clear how that good formative assessment information was influencing the next lesson of that subject.

Marking is frequent and contains plenty of praise for pupils' efforts, but also praises some mediocre quality work. Many examples, particularly in English, accurately identify what needs to be done for the work to improve. In one class, pupils are expected to indicate that they have read the comments, and in some of those cases they respond to the advice by making corrections. However, more often the advice is too open ended, and does not instruct pupils to correct work. For example, a reasonably neat science diagram had the comment 'Great diagram – remember it needs labels', rather than telling the pupil to add labels and show the teacher. Because many lessons take too long to get pupils working individually, the volume of written work, particularly in the older age groups, is quite low. This is another factor hampering pupil progress – they are not getting enough practice.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it meets the needs of all pupils – inadequate.

Leadership and management

There has been insufficient time for the new senior leadership team of executive headteacher and acting deputy to impact upon the quality of teaching and learning, and hence raise standards. There is no clarity at present regarding the long term recruitment of a substantive headteacher or deputy headteacher. There has been a very recent re-assignment of subject coordinator roles to middle managers. As yet they have received no training for these roles, nor have they received substantive job descriptions of what they expected to deliver. The new senior leadership team has identified weakness in the accuracy of teachers' assessments. This has undermined the reliability of previous target setting.

Priorities have not been rationalised to a manageable series of steps that quickly improves teaching and learning, in particular lesson planning that builds on an accurate understanding of the ability of each pupil, and also what they succeeded in learning, or did not learn properly from the last lesson. The school has the considerable expertise and experience of the new headteacher and deputy on site. Their day-to-day work alongside teachers in coaching and modelling good practice is a necessary part of accelerating progress in school improvement. External support for teaching staff is insufficiently coordinated to meet their individual professional development needs. There remains a risk that too many well meant ideas and initiatives arriving from outside might overwhelm staff, where their primary priority rests with improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve leadership and management at all levels in the school – inadequate.

External support

The local authority's statement of action was evaluated as satisfactory. Much of the work done by the local authority since the school originally went into a category of concern in November 2005 was focused on trying to improve leadership and management. This was lost when the previous senior leadership team left the school in the summer term of 2008. Although new senior leadership personnel directly employed by the local authority are now at the school, this has been too soon to improve the quality of teaching and learning measurably and so raise standards. Nevertheless, senior leaders, and local authority officers, have a realistic view of the slow progress made to date by the school. The local authority acted swiftly to respond to the departure of the previous headteacher and deputy in July 2008.