

CfBT  
Suite 22  
West Lancashire  
Investment Centre  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01695 566934  
Direct F 01695 729320  
[gtunncliffe@cfbt.com](mailto:gtunncliffe@cfbt.com)



13 March 2009

Miss A Skelton  
Headteacher  
Dearne Goldthorpe Primary School  
Barnsley Road  
Goldthorpe  
South Yorkshire  
S63 9NG

Dear Miss Skelton

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Dearne Goldthorpe Primary School

Following my visit with Fiona Gowers and Ross Parker, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 11–12 March, 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 October 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

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 governors and the Director for Children, Young People and Families Services for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: Monitoring of Dearne Goldthorpe Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 11–12 March 2009

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

## Context

Staffing turbulence reported in the last inspection has not been fully resolved. Four teachers are on long-term absence and three of the five teachers in Key Stage 2 are temporary. The senior leadership team has recently been reorganised. Apart from the headteacher, all of the senior leaders are at an early stage in developing their leadership skills, with extensive support from the local authority.

## Achievement and standards

Before the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 were well below average and this had been the case for several years. The school's data indicate that teachers are now effectively tackling a legacy of poor achievement, because the proportion of pupils making good progress has increased considerably since the inspection. In Year 6, for example, over half of the pupils are making progress at a better than expected rate in English, mathematics and science. In Year 2 around two thirds of pupils are making better than expected progress in reading and writing. All groups of pupils in these classes achieve well because work is effectively adapted to meet their differing needs and interests. While there is good progress in some aspects of work in other classes, this is not yet sufficiently consistent. Too little is expected of some higher attaining pupils and there is insufficient opportunity to learn from stimulating, relevant experiences or practical enquiry.

The improvement in pupils' progress has enabled the school to set targets for the 2009 national tests and assessments in Year 2 and 6 that are considerably higher than the standards attained in previous years. Records of pupils' achievements indicate that the school is making good progress towards these targets and is on track to reach national Key Stage 2 floor targets for the first time.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards and increase the rate of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory.

## Personal development and well-being

Pupils' attendance has improved considerably since the last inspection, although it is still below average. The number of persistent absentees has reduced significantly as a result of actions taken to encourage families to send their children to school more regularly. Rigorous monitoring has led to an improvement in punctuality.

Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Teachers have had to take robust action with a small minority of troublesome older pupils, which has led to an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions. This has reduced disruption to the work of the school and, as a result, pupils say they are enjoying lessons more and feeling safe.

Pupils' attitudes to work are satisfactory overall. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing good skills of working independently. Older pupils comply with teachers' requirements in closely controlled lessons, but few show any initiative in their learning. They make satisfactory progress in developing the skills necessary to contribute to the life of the school.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Improve attendance – satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. Inadequate teaching has largely been eradicated, although only a small proportion is good or better. There is consistency in the structure of lessons; they all have a clear objective, activities that are adapted to meet the range of pupils' needs and an opportunity to assess pupils' progress. There is, however, some variability between classes in how effectively these different aspects of the lesson are used. This partly reflects the difficulty in embedding new approaches given the large number of temporary staff.

Where lessons are most effective, teachers continually review pupils' progress towards the lesson objective to ensure that the work is enabling them to develop new skills at a good pace. Where teaching is adequate, pupils make satisfactory progress because lessons are well ordered and clearly explained. However, assessment information is not used effectively to provide work at a high enough level of challenge to accelerate pupils' progress beyond a satisfactory rate.

The school has an effective system for monitoring pupils' progress and this gives them an accurate picture of which pupils need additional support or challenge. This information is not yet used routinely by all teachers to tailor activities that enable all pupils to build successfully on what they already know. Arrangements for providing additional support to underachieving pupils are at an early stage of development. Pupils are given targets to improve their progress; however there is no consistent approach to this across the school and little useful guidance is offered on how to achieve the targets. Some teachers have developed effective practice in informing

pupils about what they need to concentrate on in their next piece of work to improve their achievement. Many pupils have a clear understanding of these 'small-step' targets; however, there is no systematic approach for giving pupils time to work on these targets or for monitoring their progress in achieving them.

The curriculum shows little improvement since the last inspection. Senior leaders recognise the deficiencies and have started to introduce improvements, but work is at an early stage. Where visits and cross-curricular links are being used, they are making a strong contribution to pupils' motivation and progress. Overall, however, there are still too few planned links between subjects to help pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills in interesting, relevant contexts. There are also too few opportunities to develop skills in problem solving, practical investigation and independent research. The inappropriate use of worksheets has not improved significantly since the last inspection.

Teachers are working hard to improve the learning environment for pupils by removing clutter and providing attractive wall displays. The most effective display provides helpful guidance to pupils and teachers make use of this during lessons. Pupils say that there have been improvements in the range of extra-curricular activities and they particularly enjoy the specialist sports coaching. The welfare of pupils is given high priority and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching to a good or better level and ensure rigour, pace and challenge in all lessons – satisfactory.
- Provide an exciting, relevant curriculum which always motivates pupils to learn – inadequate.
- Use assessment information systematically to build on what pupils already know – inadequate.

## Leadership and management

The headteacher gives clear direction and guidance to staff on strategies to remove obstacles to progress. She makes effective use of pupil progress data for setting challenging targets to raise standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. She has also begun to use the data to hold all teachers to account for pupils' progress towards these targets. The school improvement plan provides a clear and appropriate programme of activities to tackle key priorities. The headteacher uses the plan effectively to maintain the school's focus on the aspects of provision that need to be improved most urgently, and to ensure that the local authority support concentrates on these aspects as well.

Senior leaders, other than the headteacher, are at an early stage of developing their skills in monitoring teaching and learning, and they are receiving considerable support from the local authority. They are now taking the first steps in leading school improvement without support. Governors' understanding of the strengths and

weaknesses of the school has improved since the last inspection. Their work in objectively and rigorously holding the school to account is improving much more slowly. The local authority has therefore taken the appropriate step of appointing an additional governor with wide experience who will start providing guidance in the near future.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Strengthen senior management and ensure that all leaders carry out rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to tackle underachievement – satisfactory.

### External support

The local authority was aware of the school's difficulties before the last inspection and had already started to provide support. It was therefore in a good position to tailor its post-inspection support plan to the needs of the school. The additional support is having a strong positive impact on the development of the leadership team, the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress. The work with senior leaders is carefully planned to build their capacity to lead and sustain school improvement without additional support. Arrangements for monitoring the impact of the support plan are good. A steering group comprising local authority officers, the headteacher and governors meets regularly to examine progress against each area for improvement and to re-focus work as required.

The local authority has partnered Dearne Goldthorpe with a nearby school which has recently overcome challenging circumstances. School leaders and teachers report that they are gaining much benefit from this partnership.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Improve guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work; ensure that pupils can respond to this guidance and that their response is checked.
- Improve pupils' engagement and independence in learning by providing more interesting, relevant activities with more opportunities for practical enquiry and problem solving.