

Prospects Learning Services Ltd
Prospects House
19 Elmfield Road
Bromley, Kent
BR1 1LT

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Direct T 020 8315 1250
www.ofsted.gov.uk Direct F 020 8315 1279



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Mr Nick Munns
Executive Headteacher
Monteagle Primary School
Burnham Road
Dagenham
RM9 4RB

Dear Mr Munns

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Monteagle Primary School

Following my visit with Gillian Smith and Calvin Pike, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 6 and 7 July 2009, 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 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

A maximum of two newly qualified teachers may 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 the interim executive board and the Corporate Director of Children's Services for Barking and Dagenham.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Monteagle Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 July 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed different aspects of the school's work and scrutinised documents, such as teachers' planning and data about pupils' progress. They met with the executive headteacher, other staff in leadership positions, representatives of the school council and members of the interim executive board (IEB). A total of 22 lessons were observed and inspectors also looked through samples of pupils' work.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the staffing situation has remained fairly stable. The English coordinator left at Easter but has been replaced. Another full-time teacher has also left and the assessment coordinator has been on long-term sick leave. A number of new appointments have been made for September. This means that all agency staff will be replaced by teachers on permanent contracts. The IEB continues to oversee the work of the school until a new governing body is appointed.

Achievement and standards

When children start school, their skills and understanding are much lower than is normally the case. A significant number are at the early stages of learning English. They blossom in the warm and challenging provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good start is consolidated in Key Stage 1, where the teaching is of high quality. At the end of Year 2, standards rose year on year until 2008, when they were average. They have fallen a little this year but pupils have made very good progress from their starting points.

In Year 6, pupils are continuing to make good progress as a result of effective teaching and support. School data confirm this good progress in English, mathematics and science, although attainment levels for the pupils currently in Year 6 are lower than they were in 2008, and the school's challenging targets have been missed. This is because pupils had not made enough progress previously during Key Stage 2. Their accelerated progress in Year 6 has not been enough to enable them to catch up. While progress has been better in reading and science, a significant proportion of pupils have underachieved in writing and mathematics since Year 3. A number of pupils who find learning difficult have made little progress during their time in Key Stage 2 because their needs have not been met effectively.

In Year 5, pupils often make good progress in lessons and many are working at or beyond the expected levels for their age. In Years 3 and 4, however, in spite of some pockets of good teaching, pupils' progress has been inadequate overall and too many pupils have not made enough progress. They have not built sufficiently on

the improving results in Key Stage 1. This is illustrated by their failure, by a considerable margin, to reach the challenging targets set for each year group by the mathematics coordinator.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards, particularly at Key Stage 2, in mathematics and science – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

Pupils say that they enjoy school and are appreciative of the help and support provided by adults. This is reflected in much better attendance, which is now close to the national average. They have good attitudes to learning and generally cooperate well with each other and with adults in lessons. Pupils behave very well in lessons, for the most part, and those who present challenging behaviour from time to time are managed well by staff. Exclusions have reduced considerably over the year. Members of the school council spoke warmly about how the school has improved since the previous inspection, for example, in helping them to understand how well they are achieving and how to improve their work. Pupils get on well together and respect one another's differences. For example, they responded sensitively in a lesson which investigated the potential dangers of stereotyping people. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and have enjoyed helping with plans to develop the school grounds.

Quality of provision

Inspectors' observations of teaching largely confirm the accuracy of the school's judgements and indicate some improvements since the last visit. The majority of lessons are of good quality and no inadequate teaching was seen. Teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 are of consistently good, and often outstanding, quality. In Key Stage 2, there are some pockets of good teaching, particularly at the upper end of the school, but most is satisfactory. In consequence, pupils are not making rapid enough progress to overcome previous underachievement.

In Key Stage 1, and in a number of lessons in Key Stage 2, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They provide interesting activities which challenge pupils of all abilities to improve their understanding and skills. In these sessions, pupils are very well motivated, respond to questions eagerly and make good progress in their learning. In too many lessons in Key Stage 2, activities are not as challenging as they might be, particularly for the more able. Pupils are still spending too long on repetitive and undemanding tasks. In some lessons, teaching assistants are not deployed as well as they might be to support pupils with learning difficulties and those who are learning English. Consequently, the pace of learning slows for these groups of pupils.

The school has made good progress since the last visit in addressing imbalances in the curriculum. The morning timetable has been revamped to allow for shorter, more focused, sessions in English and mathematics. Teachers and pupils report that this has provided more pace to these sessions. It has also allowed more time for other, previously neglected, areas of the curriculum. The school has also introduced a range of support programmes for pupils who have difficulty in mathematics. This extra support is helping these pupils to catch up.

The pastoral care of pupils continues to be strong. The leadership team has introduced better systems to encourage regular attendance and promote good behaviour. This has resulted in much improved attendance and significantly reduced exclusions. The appointment of a parental liaison officer is also helping the school to reach out to and to support its families. Academic guidance is still developing and is not yet entirely effective. Tracking systems are more robust and school leaders are clear about the progress and attainment of every pupil. However, the extent to which teachers use this information in their planning remains variable and this is reflected in pupils' inconsistent progress. There is evidence of improvement in teachers' marking and there are good examples of marking that helps pupils to improve. Nevertheless, this is not the case in all classes. Teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work is also not high enough in some classes.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- increase the pace of learning and the level of challenge in lessons so that the different needs of all pupils are met – satisfactory
- use assessment and monitoring information to match support, guidance and the curriculum to the needs of all pupils – satisfactory
- ensure safeguarding procedures fully meet government requirements – good (already resolved on a previous visit)

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher, with the able support of his leadership team, continues to provide strong and purposeful leadership, with a clear focus on raising achievement and improving teaching and learning. As a result of effective support, inadequate teaching has been eradicated. However, the drive to improve teaching has been hampered by the number of temporary staff in Key Stage 2. Curriculum leaders are very clear about their roles and are keen to develop them further. They have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. This term, for example, the new English coordinator has drawn up a very detailed assessment of the current situation and has very clear plans to address weaknesses next term. Monitoring systems for checking books and planning are not yet robust enough, however, to ensure that weaknesses are eradicated.

The school is using data with increasing rigour to ensure that the right priorities for development are identified. Performance data are also being used to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. This work remains at an early stage of development and is not yet established enough to ensure that pupils make

consistently good progress and meet challenging targets. The leadership of inclusion has not been effective enough in ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties make good progress or that there is always effective support for pupils at the early stages of learning English in Key Stage 2. The IEB continues to provide well-informed support and challenge to school leaders.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- strengthen the rigour of monitoring and evaluation by leaders at all levels to secure rapid improvement – satisfactory

External support

The local authority continues to provide good practical support to the school, notably through its advisers in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. The support of the School Improvement Partner is timely and effective. It is not as frequent as it was, as he rightly judges that the school is building internal capacity through its own leadership. Further effective support is being provided through the London Challenge programme and its federated partner school.