

Serco  
Boundary House  
2, Wythall Green Way  
Wythall  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B47 6LW

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

Direct T 0121 683 2048  
Victoria.mortimore2@serco.com

16 December 2009

Matthew Bulpitt and Graeme West  
Barnehurst Junior (Foundation) School  
Barnehurst Close  
Northumberland Heath  
Erith  
Kent  
DA8 3NL

Dear Mr Bulpitt and Mr West

Special measures: monitoring inspection of school

Following my visit to your school on 14–15 December 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 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 – good

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 of Children's Services for Bexley.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Parker", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher Parker  
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Barnehurst Junior (Foundation) School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 14 and 15 December 2009

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the pupils, the mathematics and science subject leaders, the assistant headteacher, the executive and associate headteachers, the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.

### Context

The headteacher and deputy headteacher retired at the end of the last school year. The school is currently being led and managed by an executive headteacher and an associate headteacher. They will lead the school until the planned federation with the infant school at Easter 2010.

There were many changes of teaching staff at the start of this term. An assistant headteacher and three class teachers are new to the school. Another class teacher will join the school in January 2010.

### Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6, in 2009, reflect the signs of recovery seen at the last visit. Results in English were above average and pupils made the expected amount of progress from the start of Year 3. Results in mathematics were similar to the national average, but in science they were well below average. In neither subject did enough pupils reach the higher level of which they were capable.

Underachievement in mathematics and science is being tackled with urgency. Very effective tracking allows the leadership team to analyse progress and pinpoint underachievement. Extensive analysis of the progress made by the pupils this term shows it to be accelerating in most classes, although some variation remains. More mathematics classes than science classes show evidence of increased progress. Nevertheless, there have been marked improvements since the last visit.

In lessons and in their work, it is clear that the greatest progress has been made by the older pupils. They have made considerable progress this term but there is still much to do to make sure that, for example, all Year 6 pupils reach the levels of attainment that they should by the end of the school year. Their progress is accelerating rapidly because the teachers are setting them challenging tasks in interesting contexts. In a lower set Year 6 mathematics lesson, some of the pupils were planning the Christmas Party, comparing the prices of food using supermarkets.

websites and working out what they could buy within a budget. In science, the pupils are engaged by many interesting investigations, but some of the elements of carrying out a fair test are not well enough understood by some of the younger pupils. However, their work is of a higher standard than it was and shows they are developing a broader range of investigative skills.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards and achievement, particularly in mathematics and science – good

#### Other relevant pupil outcomes

The pupils are appreciative of the changes that have taken place this term, and particularly that the drive for excellence has been added to the ethos of 'caring and sharing with responsibility and honour'. A discussion with Year 6 pupils highlighted their mature attitudes to learning and how much they value the school's response to the results of a survey of their views. Many pupils had said that they did not know how well they were doing. As a result, new target-setting, marking and assessment arrangements have been introduced. The pupils feel that these developments have made a 'huge difference'. They know their targets, have high aspirations to achieve high levels of attainment, and find their teacher's comments and the opportunities that they are given to respond very helpful.

The pupils say that they feel safe on the playground and get on well together. Pupils behave well in lessons. Year 6 pupils feel that it is easier to concentrate in lessons because most pupils are keen to do well.

#### The effectiveness of provision

The profile of the quality of teaching has improved since the last monitoring visit. More lessons are good, and occasionally they are outstanding. The strongest teaching is resulting in rapidly accelerating progress among some of the older pupils. The work of local authority consultants and advanced skills teachers is now being augmented by the support of the subject leaders in mathematics and science. The teachers are providing tasks for the pupils that engage them actively in learning through a broader range of problems and investigations. Most of the tasks the teachers set take account of previous learning and of gaps in the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This is possible because of the considerable improvements in marking and assessment. The introduction of the national programme for assessing pupils' progress provides a very secure platform for making sure that this progress continues to accelerate. Marking has improved considerably over the course of this term, and there are clear indications that this is contributing not only to an increase in the extent to which pupils respond and correct their work, but also

to how much they are growing in confidence to check and improve their work themselves.

The curriculum is developing well. In science, pupils are involved in more investigation. An outline is in place to identify the opportunities for investigative skills to be used and practised in science topics but, in some classes, not enough consideration is given to teaching and practising these skills.

The provision for groups and individuals, particularly for supporting more-able pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is increasingly well planned. Teaching assistants continue to be well briefed and provide effective support, often directed towards those with learning difficulties.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning so high expectations lead to improved achievement – good
- ensure all teachers make full use of assessment data to match work to pupils' needs – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive headteacher and the associate headteacher have quickly established a strong and shared determination to bring rapid improvement, not only within the leadership team but among all the adults who work in the school. This determination has been successfully transmitted to the whole school community because their plans extend and enhance the existing strengths of the school. The 'raising attainment plan' is very focused on the areas that require urgent improvement and also, rightly, on bringing about improvements in other important areas of the school's work.

The leadership team has been relentless in pursuing faster progress for the pupils. Coaching and training have continued to improve teaching, marking and assessment in order to make sure that the pupils are engaged in interesting and challenging tasks. Achievement assemblies have consistently promoted higher expectations among pupils, and newsletters and meetings are increasingly involving parents in the work of the school.

A new system to track the pupils' progress has been very quickly implemented and put into full use. The assistant headteacher carries out extensive analyses of the pupils' progress and provides the teachers, the leadership team and the governing body with comprehensive reports which explain very clearly the progress of, for example, those pupils taking free school meals and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, as well as that of each pupil, class and year group. The governing

body is now making good use of this information to provide greater challenge and is increasingly robust in holding the school to account for its performance.

The assistant headteacher and the mathematics and science subject leaders are playing increasingly influential roles in the leadership and management of the school. This is because the subject leaders' evaluation skills have been successfully developed through training, creating an increasingly secure capacity to sustain improvements in the future.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- develop leaders' and managers' evaluation skills to enable them to play an effective role in leading the school in improved achievement – outstanding

### External support

The governing body and the leadership team appreciate the support they have received from the local authority. Focus group meetings are held to regularly evaluate the extent of improvement. A consultant for mathematics and an advanced skills teacher for science have provided strong support to improve teaching, and to train and support subject leaders so that they can play a full role within the leadership and management of the school.