

**Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR**

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



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Mrs K Crutchfield
The Headteacher
Caen Community Primary School
Caen Street
Braunton
Devon
EX33 1AD

Dear Mrs Crutchfield

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Caen Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11–12 November 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 fourth 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 – ***satisfactory***

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – ***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 of Children and Young People's Services for Devon.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Caen Community Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 11–12 November 2009

Evidence

The inspector observed eight lessons and an assembly, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, chair of governors, teachers and groups of pupils. A telephone discussion also took place with a representative from the local authority.

Context

The school roll has remained stable since the last monitoring visit. It is currently 205 and is expected to rise to 220 following the January intake into the Reception Class. A new teacher has joined the school to lead the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The programme of major building works has been completed and since the last visit, significant improvements have been made to the outdoor play areas.

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

Pupils' achievement has continued to improve but there remains a variation in the rate of progress between different classes. Steady improvement continues in Key Stage 1 which is demonstrated by better results in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2009, where pupils' performance was just below nationally expected standards. Performance in mathematics is stronger than in reading and writing. In Years 3 and 4, concerted action to raise standards is demonstrating success and pupils are making good progress. However, in Years 5 and 6, initiatives introduced to raise standards have not been successful in accelerating pupils' rate of progress sufficiently, and attainment at the end of Year 6 remains low in all subjects. Results in national tests show too few pupils reach the expected standard, particularly in English, and not enough pupils gain the highest level in all subjects. The school is aware that performance in Years 5 and 6 needs improvement and has introduced more targeted support for pupils who are underachieving in English. Also, a good range of imaginative topics has been introduced in science which encourages pupils to investigate and draw their own conclusions. As a result, early signs show that pupils are currently making better progress, especially in their writing.

The school has identified that boys' standards are significantly lower than those of girls in reading and writing across the school and has introduced suitable initiatives to engage boys in extended writing. Since the last visit, the school has reviewed its support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and has targeted intervention more closely at specific areas for improvement. Initial evidence shows this is having a positive effect on raising standards.



Pupils' learning in the classroom is generally satisfactory, and sometimes good. Pupils enjoy learning and display good work habits. In several classes, they are set to work in pairs and small groups. As a result, they are learning to discuss their ideas more effectively and to listen to the views of others.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science and improve pupils' progress – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

A relaxed and friendly atmosphere prevails around the school. Pupils report that behaviour at the school has been improved by the new accommodation and better facilities, particularly for outdoor play. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils are pleased to report how they make a positive contribution through, for example, serving on the school council, choosing new playground equipment or raising funds to help schools in Asia and Africa.

The effectiveness of provision

In all lessons, pupils are busily engaged in purposeful activities. Classroom routines are well established and behaviour is good. Pupils report they enjoy lessons and find learning fun. A clearer focus on what pupils are expected to learn is supported by stimulating activities which capture pupils' interest. Staff establish understanding and respectful relationships with pupils and are particularly successful in including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in lessons. Occasionally, lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils, which results in slower than might be expected progress for some. Also, opportunities are sometimes missed for more capable pupils to solve problems and develop their own ideas.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and give feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. As a result, pupils generally take pride in their work and the presentation of work has improved. Homework is set and marked regularly.

Curriculum planning is developing well. There is clearer continuity and greater consistency in planning between classes across the school. Some aspects of cross-curricular planning are underdeveloped, for example the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Also, in a few cases, the expectation for different age groups in the same class is not made sufficiently clear. A developing range of extra-curricular clubs, which include football, netball and ICT, enrich the curriculum. Attractive displays are used to good effect to support learning, and teachers are



making good use of the improved facilities and accommodation. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now able to move freely between a good variety of activities which are provided in both indoor and outdoor areas of learning.

The role of the special educational needs coordinator is more clearly defined and linked to the evaluation of strategies. A more focused use of support has enabled those with the most complex needs to make better progress and to be included successfully alongside their peers. A detailed record of progress is kept for each pupil which enables progress to be checked more accurately. Information shows the progress of individual pupils as they move through the school. However, this information is not used to analyse the progress of the group as a whole and to set challenging targets.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that teaching promotes high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate through interesting activities that motivate pupils to learn – good
- Develop systems to identify the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at an early stage, and provide them with appropriate work and support – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

A clearer sense of purpose, shared by the headteacher and staff, is evident. Senior leaders demonstrate greater confidence and are taking action more quickly to tackle areas of underperformance. Staff are working together more closely to plan lessons, assess pupils' learning and share successful teaching practice. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is generally better. However, there remains some inconsistency in the pace of improvement in different subjects and between classes in different areas of the school. The headteacher and senior leaders have developed a closer understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The assessment of pupils' level of work is more accurate. Data are used to check the progress of individual pupils and groups, and to identify pupils who are underachieving. These data are not yet analysed sufficiently to ensure targets are suitably challenging for all pupils. Also, the senior leaders are still developing systems for evaluating new initiatives and for judging their effect on raising standards.

Subject leaders have assumed a stronger role in leading their subjects. This includes regular monitoring of curriculum planning, teaching and pupils' progress. Some have delivered training for colleagues, which has had a direct effect on improving the quality of teaching. Subject leaders now contribute directly to the school's improvement planning and as a consequence, overarching objectives are supported by a good range of relevant activities linked to raising pupils' performance in the classroom.



Better links have been established with parents. A weekly newsletter which provides key dates and information is sent home and staff have run workshops for parents which explain how various subjects are taught in school. A recent survey, whilst a relatively small sample, showed parents are broadly satisfied with the school.

The governing body is questioning the performance of the school more effectively and has a separate sub-committee to oversee standards. It is receiving more detailed information on the school's performance from senior leaders and is making visits to the school to meet pupils and to check at first hand the work of the school.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Strengthen leadership and management by developing an effective team of leaders and managers to support and implement necessary change – satisfactory.

External support

The school has benefited from considerable external support which has been effective in helping to move the school forward since the last visit. This has included advice from local authority advisers, consultants, the school improvement partner and staff from neighbouring schools. As a result, the skills and confidence of subject leaders have been raised and teachers generally have a clearer understanding of how to raise standards.

Priorities for further improvement

- Analyse the attainment in literacy of Year 6 pupils and set challenging targets to ensure a greater proportion of pupils reach nationally expected standards in English by the end of the academic year.