

Tribal Education
1–4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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

Direct T 020 8315 1250
Direct F 020 8315 1279
Robert.Lovett@ofsted.gov.uk



8 October 2009

Mr Gareth Thomas
Interim Headteacher
Barn Croft Primary School
2 Brunel Road
Walthamstow
E17 8SB

Dear Mr Thomas

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Barn Croft Primary School

Following my visit with Suzanne Gerred, additional inspector, to your school on 23 and 24 September 2009, 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 March 2009. 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 be appointed subject to discussion with HMI.

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 Education for Waltham Forest.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Special measures: monitoring of Barn Croft Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 23 and 24 September 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and the chair of governors. They spoke to pupils, looked at pupils' work and met with the local authority lead adviser.

Context

Since the school was inspected, an interim headteacher has been appointed and is expected to remain in post for the full academic year. Subject leaders for English and mathematics have been appointed and a new enlarged senior leadership team has been established. Day-to-day support for school improvement is delivered by VT Group through a strategic partnership with the local authority. The school also receives support from London Challenge which is intended to raise standards.

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

Lesson observations indicate that, as teaching is improving and lessons are becoming more interesting and enjoyable, the pace of pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate. In all lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory progress. In the best lessons, progress was good. While standards are beginning to rise, they remain too low. The school's tracking data indicate that pupils currently in Year 6 are reaching standards in English, mathematics and science that are higher than last year but remain well below average. The same tracking data show that standards in Years 1 to 6 are not high enough and that, last term, the proportion of pupils making the expected levels of progress was too low.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making faster progress because teachers and other adults have a better awareness of their differing abilities and needs and make greater use of assessment to guide their next steps in learning. Children's attainment is rising and in 2009 standards were close to national expectations by the time children entered Year 1.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Raise standards by improving the quality of teaching so that pupils make at least satisfactory progress; in particular, rectify weaknesses in pace, challenge, the use of assessment and the engagement of pupils – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes



Pupils say they feel safe, secure and happy at school. They are aware that the school is improving and are confident that any bullying or poor behaviour will be quickly identified and dealt with. Pupils get on well with each other in classrooms, in the dining hall and on the playground. They play together calmly and sensibly. While an anti-bullying policy is still being developed, actions already taken are proving effective. Pupils say that bullying is a thing of the past and that Barn Croft is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils new to the school say they receive a warm welcome and settle quickly. A midday assistant confirmed the recent improvements in behaviour and said she is confident that the school's systems for dealing with bullying are consistently applied. As a result, 'The school is a happier and more enjoyable place to work in.' This is apparent in lessons, where pupils have positive attitudes to learning and generally good levels of enjoyment. In the best lessons, there is a real sense of the fun of learning. The school buildings and grounds are immaculately clean and very well kept. There is hardly a piece of litter to be seen anywhere, indicating that pupils take pride in their school and care for their environment.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Ensure that all pupils are safe from bullying, with clear and effective procedures in place to resolve bullying incidents speedily – good.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching is improving and is now satisfactory. Inspectors saw no inadequate teaching and much that was good or better. Planning is thorough and consistent. It is not yet sufficiently differentiated to meet the learning needs of all pupils accurately. Some more able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged but are simply asked to do more of the work everyone else is doing. When explanations are clear and expectations are high, pupils move quickly from one learning activity to the next; good pace is maintained and little time lost. When expectations are not so high, the pace slows and pupils lose focus. Sometimes, teachers working with focus groups pay too little attention to the progress of other pupils, so that some lose concentration and the pace of recording is too slow.

The teaching of letters and sounds in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. As a result, children make good progress in this aspect of communication, language and literacy. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 has recently been revised in order to make it more interesting for pupils and to ensure better progression of pupils' skills. It gives greater emphasis to pupils' personal development and well-being. Greater effort is being made to provide opportunities for speaking and listening. For example, the use of talk partners is now an effective feature in most lessons. Teachers are beginning to exploit links between subjects and to plan more frequent opportunities for the development of key skills in literacy and mathematics. However, much of this work is at an early stage of implementation and, as yet, has had too little impact on pupils' achievement and standards of work.



While there were no particular issues relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage at the last inspection, provision continues to improve. There are better opportunities for children to make choices about what they do, to exercise independence and to explore and investigate with a range of materials and equipment.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Improve the curriculum, so that it meets the needs of all pupils, including their personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management were inadequate. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are now providing effective leadership and developing a clear shared vision for school improvement. They have been successful in improving pupils' behaviour, particularly on the playground. Staff and parents say the more positive ethos of the school and consistent approach to behaviour is a welcome improvement. Robust monitoring of teaching and learning, coupled with useful feedback, have enabled teachers to improve their practice. The senior leadership team is very new and has not yet had an opportunity to have an impact on school improvement.

Clear lines of communication have been opened with parents. The school operates a well-publicised open-door policy. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a high profile around the school and are on the playground at the start and end of each day to listen to parents. A weekly bulletin keeps parents up to date with school news. Procedures are in place to deal swiftly with any concerns or complaints. Parents who spoke to inspectors expressed positive views about these arrangements and about pupils' behaviour.

The governing body is now better placed to challenge the school by asking sometimes difficult questions about how well pupils are doing and addressing underperformance. The school's Raising Attainment Plan identifies appropriate priorities and actions. However, success criteria are not sufficiently specific in linking actions to measurable outcomes, particularly improvements in standards.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Ensure that the school is well led and there is a cohesive approach to school improvement, so that all leaders share a common vision and are involved in rigorous monitoring and accurate evaluation – satisfactory.
- Improve communication with parents, particularly ensuring that complaints and concerns are followed up effectively – satisfactory.

External support



VT and London Challenge have provided effective support from a range of consultants and advisers. This support was particularly valuable in the weeks immediately following the resignation of the headteacher. The local authority and VT have produced accurate assessments of the school's progress and suggested useful actions for improvement through their statement of action and visit notes. The interim headteacher is in the process of agreeing future support with the school's new lead adviser so that it best meets the school's developing needs.

