

Tribal Group
1–4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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



17 December 2009

Mrs E Walford
Robin Hood Junior School
Thorncroft Road
Sutton
Surrey
SM1 1RL

Dear Mrs Walford

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Robin Hood Junior School

Following my visit with Eileen Chadwick, additional inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 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 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's Services for Sutton.

Yours sincerely

Gill Close
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Robin Hood Junior School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 December 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' work, and spoke with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents, the chair of governors, the parent champion and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last inspection, the local authority has appointed a parent champion. His role is to ensure good communication with parents and that they are able to influence decisions about the future of the school. There are also new coordinators for special educational needs and for literacy. This monitoring inspection focused on the two areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, which relate to achievement, teaching, leadership and management. It did not inspect other pupil outcomes.

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

Since the last inspection, the focus on teaching and support for Year 6 pupils has led to a substantial proportion of them making progress within or between the National Curriculum levels. However, in other year groups, the school's data and inspection evidence show that some pupils are not moving forward fast enough or are falling behind. Attainment projected by the school for the end of the year shows potential for average proportions in Year 6 to meet national expectations. Nevertheless, there is still more to do to improve attainment in writing and mathematics, given that pupils join the school with widespread but above-average attainment overall. At the next monitoring inspection, the evidence shown by data and pupils' work of their progress and attainment will form a key part of the evaluation to determine the school's continued and overall progress on this area for development.

Higher attainers are being challenged more in literacy in Years 5 and 6. Booster and intervention groups are beginning to make a difference, especially where the attainment range of pupils in them is narrow. In Year 6, they are contributing to marked progress in literacy and advances in mathematics, but their impact varies in other years, with some pupils making little progress or falling back. For pupils who are a special focus for improvement within the main teaching class, there is also varying progress.

In lessons, the progress pupils are making varies across classes, subjects and attainment groups. Pupils make better progress where teaching is challenging and interesting and involves them in activities that are matched well to their needs. In



some lessons, the activities do not stretch the high attainers enough, while in others they do not provide sufficient access for the lower attainers. Sometimes pupils' weaknesses in the basics of spelling, handwriting or punctuation hold back their overall attainment.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, by improving the quality of teaching and learning through:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring assessment data are used to plan lessons that challenge all learners, particularly the higher-attaining pupils – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

Staff are working together effectively with a clear focus on improvement. They have taken on new approaches to teaching mathematics, which is now provided in mixed-ability classes, with some pupils taught separately in small booster groups. They are also using exciting contexts in literacy lessons and have linked some writing well across the curriculum, such as on the Second World War. Staff in each year group are planning lessons together. These plans are using National Curriculum levels to pitch work for different groups within the class. Nevertheless, this does not match needs closely enough and the wide attainment range is not catered for sufficiently well. Some work does not extend higher attainers or those who have met the concepts previously, and contexts or content are sometimes too hard for lower attainers, particularly in booster groups. For example, for lower attainers, the reading level required for some writing activities is too high, there is not enough structure to support writing in science and some numbers used in mathematics are too demanding. Planning for intervention groups is not effective enough for all pupils to make the necessary progress.

The quality of teaching is varied. Some good, satisfactory and inadequate teaching was seen. Where teaching was satisfactory, there were elements of the lesson which were stronger than others, such as teachers' confidence, creative use of resources and careful organisation. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who work hard and behave well.

Improvements in teaching are evident in more consistent modelling of methods and linking of them to success criteria. In mathematics, these often provide the procedures for answering a question without developing an understanding of the concept or of the need for it. Consequently, some pupils become muddled when trying to use the rules given. There is also more work with talk partners that helps all pupils to be involved actively in their learning, but sometimes pupils listen for too long to explanations when opportunities are missed to draw them all into brief pair or group activities, or set them off on individual work. In some lessons, staff do not monitor the progress of all pupils well enough to identify when they are stuck or are



finding work too easy and then adapt activities accordingly, so pupils spend too long not making sufficient progress.

Teachers refer pupils to helpful reminders that are displayed on walls. Pupils use the displays in this way but they are not constructed to promote greater enquiry or independence. Some boys lack confidence and underachieve because they are hesitant to write. They have not developed skills in extended writing and then learnt how to produce this in limited time. Some low attainers need more support so they can develop confidence in saying where they are stuck, to help work be matched more closely to their needs. There is room for the school to involve parents more in helping both in and out of school.

Teachers keep clear records of their own pupils' progress each term. They are now more aware about the performance across their year group that is shown in the improved data analyses. This has informed their higher expectations. Groups of pupils now have curricular targets each half term. These include some useful targets for punctuation, connectives and multiplication tables but do not challenge highest attainers, and some have not changed during this term. They are not used consistently in planning or for pupils to make self-assessment. Some pupils regularly record their progress against learning objectives for the lesson.

The main areas for improvement in teaching are that it meets needs more effectively through planning and monitoring during lessons, involves pupils more actively in learning and assessing, and emphasises developing of understanding.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders have successfully provided the drive and support that have raised morale and enabled staff to work together, strongly committed to improvement. Staff have worked hard this term and some improvements are evident. They have found useful the training and support for developing their teaching, and are already making some of the frank assessments needed for moving forward.

Senior leaders make accurate evaluations, which are a necessary step towards improvement. They correctly evaluate that pupils' progress is inadequate. This is because, although some pupils are making good or satisfactory progress, too many are making inadequate progress. Lessons observed jointly with senior leaders during the inspection were judged accurately and perceptively. Senior leaders observed lessons this term. They identified some weaknesses in teaching, and arranged support that has led to improvement. However, observations did not include both English and mathematics lessons for all staff who teach classes or small groups, so some important weaknesses and areas for development were not identified. Monitoring and support through lesson observation have not focused sharply or frequently enough on key areas to drive up quality and pupils' progress quickly. Evaluation of initiatives has not always been soon enough to identify which are most



successful and make rapid changes. For example, scrutiny of pupils' work has not been targeted effectively enough to pick up slow progress in booster groups or by identified pupils in classes so that speedy action could be taken to improve it.

Systems are being improved for tracking attainment and progress across complete year groups and for those with special educational needs, and for recording the types of intervention provided. The coordinators for literacy and mathematics have a better grasp of this information. They have begun to monitor planning and pupils' work, but have not had the opportunity to do so frequently. Following training from the local authority, they are expected to be observing lessons next term.

Improvement plans for this term have had an appropriate emphasis on raising attainment, although each aspect of the areas for development identified at the last inspection is not referred to specifically. Evaluation of the impact of actions against short-term targets is at an early stage.

Governors are aware of the need for sharper evaluation of performance and the impact of initiatives. They are now receiving more appropriate data to help them probe strengths and weaknesses and have been trained on interpreting it. They have met with coordinators but do not have a system for collecting first-hand evidence from pupils, teachers or support staff. Governors have set up a standards committee that has discussed pupils' attainment and progress this term but they do not explicitly review the school's progress on each element of the areas for development identified at the last inspection.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure leaders at all levels:
 - evaluate accurately the work of the school
 - develop strategic plans that focus on outcomes for the pupils
 - pursue improvement relentlessly and rigorously by systematically monitoring all aspects of the work of the school to ensure improvement plans are implemented
 - develop a secure oversight of their subject areas, undertake thorough analysis of all available performance data and are held fully accountable for their responsibilities – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority's statement of action, which sets out the support it will provide for the school, meets requirements. The support has been negotiated with the school to match it effectively to needs. It has been found useful by staff and is making an impact on teaching. It has also begun to develop leadership and management skills for the coordinators of literacy and mathematics, and of other subjects. The local authority has quickly allocated some additional funds where needs have been identified and proposed amendments, such as support for science next term. Additional training is needed for teachers and teaching assistants for the



planning and teaching for intervention groups and target pupils in class lessons. Evaluation of impact on all of the areas for development identified at the last inspection has not been informed by a wide enough range of evidence from monitoring of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work.