

Serco Education
Boundary House
2 Wythall Green Way
Middle Lane
Birmingham
B47 6LW

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

Direct T 0121 683 2049
barnaby.pain@serco.com



5 February 2010

Mr Richard Stone
Fosse Primary School
Balfour Street
Leicester
LE3 5EA

Dear Mr Stone,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Fosse Primary School

Following my visit with Keith Williams and Lynne Blakelock, Additional Inspectors, to your school on Wednesday 3 and Thursday 4 February, 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in April 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.

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 local authority, the chair of the interim executive board and the Director of Children's Services for Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Fosse Primary School

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 February 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of the leadership team, the chair of the interim executive board and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the fourth monitoring visit one teacher has returned from maternity leave. All existing staff members remain in post and, consequently, the school has an increased capacity to release members of the leadership team to contribute to school improvement work.

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

Achievement has not improved sufficiently since the last monitoring visit. Pupils continue to make slightly quicker progress, especially in Year 6, in writing than they make in reading or mathematics. The progress in mathematics, in particular, is unsatisfactory. There is not enough teaching which is good enough to accelerate pupils' progress or to enable attainment to rise. Gaps in pupils' learning and previous underachievement are not being eradicated quickly enough. There is considerable variation in the rate of progress that pupils make between subjects and year groups. The school's data show that, in literacy, pupils in Years 3 and 4 make slower progress than pupils in other year groups. Inspectors' findings support this, with clear evidence of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The school has further identified that pupils in Year 3 and in Year 5 do not make the progress that they should in mathematics. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of work indicate that pupils' make satisfactory progress in science. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language learn at a similar rate to other groups of pupils. Whilst intervention strategies are in place for the majority of pupils who are underachieving, a number of them have no such support in place. Among the latter are a small number of pupils whose attendance is poor. Missing too much school is a major factor in the underachievement of these pupils.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils show a keen desire to learn and they usually try hard in lessons. They behave well and this extends to them showing tolerance in those lessons where teaching does not engage them. However, there is some restlessness when planning for pupils' learning lacks clarity and has not taken sufficient account of their individual abilities and interests. The low attendance of pupils impacts negatively on their



economic well-being, including their preparation for the challenges of secondary education.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has not improved since the last monitoring visit. Although there is a similar amount of good teaching, the proportion of inadequate teaching has risen. In the best lessons, teachers use their knowledge of pupils' capabilities well to create an appropriate level of challenge. They keep a close check on pupils' understanding during the course of the lesson, tackle any misconceptions that arise and modify the work as the lesson unfolds. This was seen to good effect in a successful mathematics lesson in Year 5. On this occasion, good questioning ensured that the teacher was aware of how well pupils understood how to calculate fractions and was able to provide more challenging work for those who could cope with it. In too many cases, however, teachers do not use assessment well enough to plan lessons which meet pupils' differing needs. Although teachers plan work at different levels, it is sometimes too easy, or does not meet pupils' individual needs precisely enough. On occasions, there is a tendency for teachers to adhere to what had been planned, rather than modify lessons in light of the pupils' responses.

In the main, teachers provide lively introductions to lessons that capture pupils' attention and set the tone for how they should behave and concentrate. They share with pupils what they are expected to learn and how they can judge their success. Too often, however, the objective for learning is too broad or focuses too much on what pupils will do, rather than what they will learn. When this happens, pupils' progress slows because it is not clear how they will build on their previous learning. They spend too long reinforcing what they already know, understand or can do. In the best lessons, teachers make sure pupils understand the intended learning and they provide them with clear, small steps by which they can judge how well they have done.

The school has taken steps to increase the consistency in teachers' approach to marking pupils' work, so that pupils are usually given feedback about their learning. However, there are inconsistencies in the impact that marking has on pupils' learning. In the best examples, teachers give clear pointers for improvement and ensure that this guidance is acted upon by pupils. Too, often, however, there is no indication that the teacher has checked that pupils have followed their advice, or that pupils have had time to respond. Consequently, the marking does little to help pupils make better progress.

The school continues to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics and uses this information appropriately to determine who needs extra help. Although the school has identified a small number of pupils who are falling behind because of poor attendance, it has been unable to provide all of them with the extra support necessary to enable them to catch up.



The improvements to the science curriculum are continuing to ensure that pupils receive good coverage of all aspects of this subject. However, assessment in science remains at an early stage, and does not currently provide sufficient information to enable pupils' progress to be monitored over time.

The school's strategies to improve the attendance of the significant numbers of pupils who were previously poor attenders have shown a degree of success. However, attendance remains too low.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve standards and achievements in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that teaching and the curriculum consistently provide the right level of challenge for all pupils – inadequate
- ensure that all aspects of the science curriculum are covered in sufficient depth, especially in Years 1 and 2 – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Work to develop the school's procedures to evaluate its own performance and implement effective improvement strategies has slowed since the last monitoring visit. Consequently, weaknesses remain in the quality of teaching and pupils continue to make too little progress. Although lesson observations are carried out routinely to assess the quality of teaching, these are not used well enough to bring about the urgently needed improvements. Written feedback from lesson observations is not sufficiently focused on pupils' learning. The reports from observations emphasise what the teacher and pupils have done in a lesson. However, there are too few links to show how the teaching has impacted on the pupils' learning. Development points rarely provide teachers with clear guidance about how to improve their generic teaching skills. There is not a systematic approach to following up action points during subsequent observations. There is too little emphasis on raising the quality of teaching. For example, a staff meeting report following a series of lesson observations highlighted the quantity and features of good teaching but failed to report any areas for development.

The school has recently begun to involve all teachers in the review of the quality of pupils' work at staff meetings. However, this approach is not sufficiently well-developed to ensure that the impact of the school's work is effective in improving learning. For example, reviews of marking have indicated that the school's approach to providing pupils with comments guiding them about how to improve their work is working consistently throughout the school. Inspection evidence shows that, although this approach is in place, it is not consistently effective in enabling pupils to make better progress. There are still too few opportunities to evaluate the quality of pupils' work in order to provide the school with a sufficiently clear understanding of further improvements that are needed.



The three phase leaders have continued to develop their own skills through a variety of professional development opportunities. For example, they have visited an outstanding school through the school's work with Leicester City Challenge and have received training in mentoring and coaching. The skills they have developed have been put to good effect in helping to improve the quality of teaching in one class. The mathematics coordinator has a good understanding of the shortcomings in assessment, planning and teaching which underpin the slower progress pupils make in mathematics. However, the school has not implemented effective strategies to overcome these weaknesses.

The school's system to track the progress made by pupils, based on internal assessments, is rigorous and includes moderation within the school. However, pupils identified as underachieving are not always provided with the support they need to enable them to plug the gaps in their learning. For example, too little attention is paid to meeting the needs of pupils whose attainment is average but who are making too little progress.

The interim executive board has maintained its clear focus on school improvement. Its members are suitably experienced and committed to helping the school move forward. For example, one member of the interim executive board worked with the science coordinator to carry out a review of science throughout the school. Evidence on progress is collected both through visits to the school and through reports from the headteacher and local authority. However, the shortcomings in the school's self-evaluation are reflected in the limited detail the interim executive board receives about the quality of teaching, for example. Nevertheless, the interim executive board fully understands that the school's progress has slowed.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that self-evaluation is based on a rigorous and accurate analysis of the work of the school, including assessment data so that the school's leaders identify and address weaknesses at the early stages – inadequate
- deal effectively with current weaknesses by implementing the plan to raise attainment swiftly and determinedly – inadequate
- work with the local authority to recruit and train governors to monitor the work of the school and provide sufficient challenge – satisfactory.

External support

The school has continued to receive support from the local authority and through Leicester City Challenge to support the work of the leadership team. However, the local authority recognises that it needs to re-focus its support in order to provide the leadership team with the skills necessary to bring about the urgent improvements required to teaching and learning.

Priority for further improvement



- Work more effectively with parents and carers to raise levels of attendance and reduce considerably the proportion of pupils whose attendance is too low.

