

Suite 22 West
Lancs
Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

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

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320
Allan.Torr@ofsted.gov.uk



4 March 2010

Mrs Elaine Hibbert
Headteacher
Hollin Primary School
Waverley Road
Middleton
Manchester
Greater Manchester
M24 6JG

Dear Mrs Hibbert

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hollin Primary School

Following my visit with Geoff Lawrence, additional inspector, to your school on 2 and 3 March 2010, 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 November 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 – 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 the Interim Executive Board and the Executive Director, Children Schools and Families for Rochdale.

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Hollin Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 March 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work including 15 lessons, one assembly and two registrations; scrutinised documents; met with the headteacher, staff, the teaching and learning consultant, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), representatives of the local authority and, informally, with a number of parents.

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

Standards are rising: an increasing proportion of pupils are working at, and in some instances beyond, the levels expected for their age. Pupils are gaining ground in their knowledge and understanding because rates of progress are accelerating: previous underachievement is gradually being overcome. The school's data show that in the first half of this year a significant percentage of pupils made more progress in the core subjects than is usually expected in an entire year. However, both rates of progress and levels of attainment are uneven across the school.

A number of strategies are contributing to the improved picture. In particular, a whole-school approach to teaching writing is providing a consistent and supportive structure, as well as a theme which has captured pupils' imaginations. Regular assessment of writing, using an agreed national system, is helping teachers to identify pupils' learning needs more accurately and focus teaching more precisely. Resources are used effectively to ensure that Year 6 pupils are taught in small ability groups. Regular monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work by the teaching and learning consultant, and the consequent advice, is resulting in more sharply targeted planning for mathematics and improvements in assessment for learning.

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their consistently good behaviour are having a positive impact on their rates of progress. Little time is wasted because, in almost all lessons, pupils listen well to their teachers and follow instructions promptly. They work well together in groups and share ideas sensibly, for instance, with their 'talk partners'. They show pride in their written work which, in the main, is well presented.

The increased rigour with which all pupils' progress is now monitored, including for those who find learning difficult, has resulted in much more acutely targeted use of intervention strategies. Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of support programmes shows that they are having a positive impact, accelerating pupils' learning and reducing levels of underachievement. In a number of instances, pupils no longer require support because they have gained enough ground to learn



alongside their peers. The diagnostic processes for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are now more refined and this has led to very specific, tailored support. The evidence of its success can be seen in the improved rates of progress for almost all of these pupils. The school makes good use of its partnerships with the co-located special school and outside agencies both to find the best ways of meeting these pupils' needs and to help staff gain the skills needed to do this.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards and accelerate achievement in mathematics, writing and science at Key Stage 2 – good
- do more to boost the achievement of pupils who find learning hard, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities – good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Improvements in the rate of attendance made last term have been sustained. Attendance continues to be above average week by week: levels of persistent absence have reduced significantly. Pupils are well aware of the need for good attendance because this is reinforced regularly, including in assemblies. They are keen to win the weekly class trophy as well as rewards for full attendance, such as trips to the cinema. The school maintains a robust approach where attendance is poor.

The school is working hard to engage parents and carers in supporting their child's learning. The opportunity to work alongside their child in a new 'Wizard Writing' session was well received by the good number of parents and carers who attended. In addition, a small number of parents and carers of young children are following a short course on ways in which to help their child learn at home. However, the Early Years Foundation Stage staff recognise that more needs to be done to involve parents and carers as partners in learning as early as possible. Parents and carers spoken to all commented that the school has improved and is now 'on top of things'.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- persist with developing strategies to raise attendance – good

The effectiveness of provision

While there remains some variation in the quality of teaching and learning, the vast majority of the lessons seen showed that recent improvements to classroom practice have been maintained at the very least and, in a number of areas, built upon. Teachers' better use of assessment information to plan work that matches pupils' needs more closely is paying dividends in rising rates of progress. Pupils say they are enjoying lessons more because, as one commented, 'work is now set at your level'.



A marking policy with a greater emphasis on giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work has been introduced. The use of peer and self-assessment by pupils is beginning to be more evident, particularly in mathematics, and contributing to the better progress being made.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has continued to develop, most notably in the outdoor area. This has resulted in a more balanced curriculum and has provided greater opportunities for children, and boys in particular, to learn in a stimulating environment. Adults use assessment well, identifying next steps in learning and setting appropriate tasks to address these. There is, however, a discrepancy between the observed levels of children's development and the recorded assessment data, which overestimates the children's development. This inconsistency means that school leaders do not have a sound base from which to plan for transition or make strategic decisions.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- use assessment information more effectively, particularly at Key Stage 2, to plan work that meets pupils' individual needs and enables pupils to make good progress – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's progress. Her astute evaluation of strengths and weaknesses leads to well-founded strategies to effect improvements. A thorough tracking system has been established and detailed analyses of data are used well to highlight the impact of provision on learning. Realistic strategies are put in place to bring about improvements and resources are matched to priorities. For example, teachers and teaching assistants are being redeployed to areas where pupils' needs have been identified as greatest and progress is less secure. Regular and frequent monitoring of teaching, planning and assessment, conducted by the teaching and learning consultant, is robust. It is followed up rigorously and forms a firm basis for whole-school training as well as support for individual staff.

The headteacher has taken a number of helpful steps to expand leadership capacity across the school. Curriculum teams are gradually gaining an overview of the areas for which they are responsible. In the process they are developing the skills required to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision. Coaching and support are helping senior staff develop a knowledge and understanding of leadership roles and responsibilities.

The IEB works well with the headteacher to drive improvement at the strategic level. Members have high expectations of the school. They are giving careful consideration to securing a smooth transition to a new governing body in due course.



Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- develop robust systems to monitor and evaluate the school's work in order to better inform self-evaluation and development planning - good

External support

Local authority support is well gauged in responding to the school's needs; supporting the development of leadership capacity; and providing regular, realistic evaluations of progress. Well-considered plans are being developed for the gradual reduction of support as the school's capacity strengthens. The local authority is deploying Greater Manchester Challenge resources effectively, for instance, in the appointment of the teaching and learning consultant.