

Tribal Education
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 1234234
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0845 123 6001
Direct F 0845 123 6002
email:sarah.cartlidge@tribalgroup.com

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Mrs Angela Hartley-Kane
The Headteacher
Calcot Junior School
Curtis Road
Calcot
Reading
Berkshire
RG31 4XG

Dear Mrs Angela Hartley-Kane

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Calcot Junior School

Following my visit with Crystal Gail Robertson, additional inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 May 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 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 the following qualifications: appropriate induction and support plans are in place and approved by Ofsted.

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 West Berkshire.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Calcot Junior School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 11 and 12 May 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, school staff, groups of pupils, parent champions, the chair of the interim executive board, and a representative of the local authority.

Context

The school now has an operational interim executive board that replaced the governing body. An acting headteacher was appointed soon after the school was subject to special measures and a new executive headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2010. This new role of executive headteacher is part of the plans to form a federation between the infant and junior schools.

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

The school has worked hard to increase the pace of learning and the focus in Year 5 has demonstrated a successful start to this process. Pupils generally have very positive attitudes to learning and are eager to move on and take up the opportunities they are presented with. Year 3 pupils, supported well by clear and focused lessons, make a strong start. Pupils maintain their enthusiasm for learning and engage with activities well but despite this they make poor progress across Year 4. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they are beginning to make up some ground lost earlier in the school. The school recognises that pupils do not make sufficient progress overall and are capable of much more. They have started to address the underlying issues in order to raise achievement for all pupils.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by making sure that work is accurately matched to their prior learning – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils demonstrate a clear pride in their school and a willingness to engage with staff to cooperate in the learning process. Where teachers build on prior knowledge and extend the level of challenge in activities, they are successful in converting the busy activity in classrooms into progress. Where it is less successfully focused, pupils remain engaged and active but make little progress as challenge is insufficient or guidance is not clear. Attendance is above average overall. A business and enterprise group is working hard to organise a cinema evening and this is an example of pupils contributing to the school community well.

The effectiveness of provision

The best teaching observed during the visit enables pupils to make good progress. Through clear planning and engaging lessons, pupils use precise targets to work independently towards structured short-term goals. This practice is however too inconsistent across the school. There are very warm and friendly relationships in classrooms. Teachers plan more thoroughly now but do not follow plans or adapt them sufficiently to the varying needs of individuals during lessons. Teachers are becoming better at using tracking information and, although this is not used consistently, some teachers are effective in using the information to inform their daily practice. There has been a great deal of work undertaken on assessment, with the school having a clearer picture about the progress of pupils and groups within the school. This is beginning to inform the interventions and support needed.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality and accuracy of teachers' assessments so that they are able to challenge all pupils to do their best – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher has brought a clear direction to the school and has started to lay firm foundations for the future of the school. She has done this by recognising the potential within all staff, teachers, administration and support staff, and ensuring they are empowered and supported in moving things forward. Monitoring, particularly of teaching, is now much more effective. Progress tracking information is more accessible and useful in informing planning. There are clear expectations and difficult issues are being tackled. Staff have generally risen to the challenge and recognise the real need for all involved in the school to raise their game. The interim executive board recognises that it has much to do still but a great deal of work has been done in setting up more systematic approaches to supporting and challenging the school and evaluating impact on pupils.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning, and sharing clear guidance for teachers on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory
 - setting a clear direction and strengthening the role of all leaders, including governors, in evaluating the impact of the school's work on outcomes for the pupils – satisfactory.

External support

The school has been effectively supported by the local authority since being subject to special measures. Training and consultant support have been focused and appreciated by the school in establishing and starting to meet the needs of staff. There has been appropriate and extensive targeted support available for all

teachers, including that to strengthen the work of stronger teachers. The local authority's statement of action has helped the school to establish priorities. The statement lacked clear milestones for the school but this is being addressed through school planning.

Priorities for further improvement

No further priorities are required as the original areas for development are key to sustained and rapid development in the school.