

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 Direct T 01695 566930
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Direct F 01695 729320
www.ofsted.gov.uk gtunnicliffe@cfbt.com

20 May 2010

Mr D Saunders
Headteacher
Broom Valley Community Primary School
Broom Valley Road
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S60 2QU

Dear Mr Saunders

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Broom Valley Community Primary School

Following my visit with Moira Fitzpatrick, additional inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 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 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 Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Broom Valley Community Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 May 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised management documents and analysed pupils' work. They met with the headteacher, senior leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, the School Improvement Partner and two representatives from the local authority.

Context

Since the inspection, the two deputy headteachers have resigned, one for retirement and the other to take up a post in another school. One deputy headteacher post has already been filled from within the school and arrangements are well advanced for recruiting a second, which will be an external appointment. The school is in the process of reorganising its leadership structure and recruiting other new leaders.

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

Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of school records show that the proportion of pupils making satisfactory or better progress has improved since the inspection. Pupils' progress accelerates in the upper part of Key Stage 2 where the quality of teaching is stronger. Standards, therefore, have started to rise. The improvement is most marked in mathematics, both for average and higher attainers. While analysis of school data shows a slight improvement overall in English, there are examples throughout the school of notable improvements in writing and in speaking and listening. This is because staff are introducing new approaches to improving these two areas of learning and their work is beginning to bear fruit. In some classes, pupils' speaking skills make a significant contribution to their improving progress.

Observations of lessons and support groups indicate that pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those who have recently arrived at the school, are improving their progress at the same rate as most other pupils. Younger pupils receiving additional reading support are making much better progress because assessment information is used effectively to tailor work precisely to their needs. The majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not improving their progress significantly when working in groups during whole-class lessons. This is because their work is not suitably adapted and staff supporting them have not had sufficient training for their role.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raising attainment and improving pupils' achievement – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved since the inspection and they are well motivated in most lessons. They work well independently and their growing skill in discussing problems in groups helps them to achieve more. Pupils enjoy coming to the school and there has been no reduction in their attendance since the inspection when it was judged to be above average. The school is maintaining its strength in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Key Stage 2 pupils, for example, talk confidently about the school's values and can give good everyday examples of how they are put into practice. The school brings together pupils from many different backgrounds into a happy and cohesive community.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has improved since the inspection. Teachers' encouraging relationships motivate pupils to do their best. The pace of learning has increased in most classes because teachers do not expect pupils to sit and listen for too long without doing anything. Where pace slows it is because lesson plans do not have a clear objective for what pupils will learn. Consequently, teachers' explanations are too wide-ranging and practical tasks are more jobs to be completed than opportunities to learn something new.

The use of assessment information has improved since the inspection. Teachers collect much useful information on pupils' progress and use it effectively for identifying those pupils who need additional support because their progress is stalling. Teachers are improving their awareness of which pupils in their class are working above age-related expectations, which are broadly in line and which are below. Many, however, have not yet developed sufficient skill in planning work that provides the correct level of challenge for all of these groups. Very few systematically seek information about pupils' progress during lessons and use it to modify their planning for the following lessons. Pupils' targets are too broad and long term to help them to accelerate their progress. The school has a clear understanding of these weaknesses and, with the support of the local authority, has begun to introduce new approaches for more precise assessment, planning and target-setting. Staff are engaging positively with this work and it is beginning to contribute to improving pupils' progress.

There has been little improvement since the inspection in the contribution of teaching assistants to pupils' learning. Senior leaders, however, have arranged to provide them with professional development in the near future and, in preparation for this, have already begun a detailed audit of their skills.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improving pace in lessons and the use of assessment information to support pupils' learning – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The senior leadership team of headteacher and two deputy headteachers recognise the causes for concern and are strongly committed to removing them. For this venture, they have effectively secured the cooperation of all staff. A well-focused action plan makes clear what each teacher needs to contribute to the achievement of increasingly challenging school targets and this is helping to develop a more widely shared accountability for raising standards.

The school's monitoring and evaluation processes have improved since the inspection. A particular strength is the system senior leaders use for collating evidence from a range of sources to give a detailed picture of the quality of teaching in each class. This has given them a clear view of strengths and weaknesses across the school which broadly matches the findings of the monitoring inspectors. Senior leaders have improved the information they collect about pupils' outcomes and they have started to use this well to gain an overview of pupils' progress. They have also begun to use the information effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress of all groups of pupils in their class. They are not yet using their information sufficiently to evaluate the progress of groups of pupils such as higher attainers, those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are, therefore, not yet in a position to judge accurately whether the provision for these groups is having the required impact on improving their achievement.

While senior leaders are gaining a clearer picture of strengths and weaknesses in the school, their efforts to introduce sustainable improvements are hampered by the lack of leadership capacity beyond the headteacher and the two departing deputy headteachers. The school has made an effective start in building new capacity. The newly appointed deputy headteacher is already establishing her whole-school leadership role and is leading groups of teachers in improving pupils' language skills. New leadership posts have been created and recruitment to these has begun. The school has established three working parties designed to engage the wider involvement of teachers in planning and implementing improvements. While these groups have only recently begun their work, there is already some evidence of a more distributed approach to leadership; for example, one teacher has made good progress in planning how the school can better meet the needs of pupils identified as gifted and talented.

The effectiveness of the governing body has not improved sufficiently since the inspection. The chair of governors is committed to the school and works well in partnership with senior leaders. She is closely involved alongside local authority partners in monitoring impact of the plans to bring the school out of special

measures. However, the governing body as a whole has insufficient capacity to keep all aspects of the school's work under regular review and to provide support or challenge as required.

The school has systematic arrangements in place for checking the suitability of all adults who come into contact with pupils, for ensuring all staff receive child protection training and for assessing risks in out-of-school activities.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improving monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision, particularly the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes – satisfactory
- Closer scrutiny by the governing body of the school's performance – inadequate

External support

The local authority's statement of action fulfils requirements. To avoid overload and confusion for teachers, the local authority's action plan has successfully integrated the Improving Schools Programme, which the school had already introduced before the inspection. Support is being provided in accordance with the plan and this has helped the school to carry out essential groundwork for making the required improvements to leadership and the use of assessment. The local authority has provided funding to extend the involvement of the School Improvement Partner. His guidance and challenge is helping school leaders to be clear about how they can most effectively monitor and improve the quality of teaching. The school is using external support in a positive manner, but not yet to develop its capacity to sustain improvement independently. This is because the senior leadership team is undergoing substantial change, middle leadership is at a very early stage of development and the governing body cannot sufficiently hold the school to account.

Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the capacity of the governing body to evaluate the work of the school and to provide support or challenge as required.