

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22, West Lancashire
Investment Centre
Maple View
White Moss Business Park
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566934
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: gtunncliffe@cfbt.com



18 July 2010

Ms Anne Skelton
Headteacher
Dearne Goldthorpe Primary School
Barnsley Road
Goldthorpe
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S63 9NG

Dear Ms Skelton

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Dearne Goldthorpe Primary School

Following my visit with John Richardson HMI and Fiona Gowers, Additional Inspector, to your school on 22–23 June 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 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 – satisfactory.

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 Executive Director for Children, Young People and Families in Barnsley.

Yours sincerely

Peter Jones
Additional Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Special measures: monitoring of Dearne Goldthorpe Primary School Report from the first monitoring inspection on 22–23 June 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents and pupils' books. They also met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of Governors, the School Improvement Partner, the School Support Officer and groups of pupils.

Context

There has been considerable long-term staff absence since the school was made subject to special measures. One third of the teachers are on temporary contracts. Since the previous monitoring inspection, a permanent appointment of senior leader has been made in Key Stage 1. The post will be in place from the start of the new academic year in September.

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

Monitoring by the local authority points towards a picture of improving provision and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The integration of Nursery and Reception classes and the work of a new team led by the deputy headteacher have made a positive impact. Assessments are now more accurate and many children are making faster progress. A greater proportion of children are currently reaching age-related expectations.

Overall, progress in Key Stage 2 is improving noticeably. The school's data, based on teachers' assessment and validated by the local authority, indicate improved teaching and progress and raised standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. The gap is now closing on national average standards. However, in Key Stage 1 progress has not been as strong. Teachers' assessments confirm a decline in levels of attainment since 2009. This is the result of both the lower starting points of these pupils and the disrupted teaching they have experienced. The school is well aware of the need to strengthen and stabilise the quality of teaching and learning in this area and to this effect has recently made an appointment of an experienced practitioner into Key Stage 1 to operate from September. The post holder will also be a member of the senior leadership team. Recently there has been more detailed analysis of the progress of different groups and within different subjects. This is being used to inform school priorities more effectively.



Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and increase the rate of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory.

Other relevant outcomes for pupils

There has been a significant improvement in pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. Pupils observed in lessons and individuals spoken to by inspectors show a greater sense of community and pride in their school. Relationships are generally more positive and pupils work more effectively in teams with others.

The improvement in attendance noted during the last monitoring visit has been maintained. Attendance figures have slipped very recently as a result of illness and a rise in the number of families taking unauthorised leave to go on holiday in term time. The school takes a firm line on this issue and clearly communicates the negative impact of this decision on the achievement and personal development of those pupils involved. The trend of attendance over time is improving. The reward scheme for attendance continues to motivate pupils to attend school regularly and the school is seeking ways to extend the scheme further.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve attendance – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching, including the use of assessment, continues to improve in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2 in particular. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the quality of learning activities, both indoors and outdoors, is more focused on learning. Activities are more stimulating, motivating children to explore more widely. The support for children provided by adults is more effective and underpins the improving progress. It fosters the increased levels of children's confidence and independence and their positive attitudes to learning.

In Key Stage 2 progress has accelerated since the last monitoring visit. An increased level of rigour, pace and challenge was evident in most of the lessons observed. Pupils' ability to work independently, their enthusiasm and their concentration levels and engagement with their tasks are developing more strongly. However, the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 remains inconsistent as the staffing instability noted in previous visits remains. There is an over-reliance on more formal activities in some lessons and learning is sometimes not as well structured and adapted to meet the needs of individuals and groups as it is in other parts of the school.



The school continues to use assessment information more effectively. Leaders are producing more reliable and practical data that is being used to guide the overall direction of the school. However, assessment information is not always used as well in all lessons to pitch work to match the abilities of individual pupils precisely. In Key Stage 2 pupils confirm the more consistent and regular use of their individual target books is helping them improve their work. The quality of marking continues to improve and provides pupils with a better balance of praise and advice to help them take the next steps in their learning.

Work to improve the curriculum has continued successfully. Pupils say that lessons are more fun now and they appreciate the increased input they are given into what they learn. There is now a greater emphasis given to scientific investigation in the curriculum and pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, are enjoying the more exciting and varied tasks they are asked to undertake. This is also helping to improve pupils' independent working skills and improved planning is helping pupils to build systematically on their prior learning. Pupils now enjoy an increased range of enrichment activities and visits, and there are more visitors coming into school. In particular, pupils mentioned the 'survival day' held in school and the opportunities to go ice skating and visit a coal mine. One pupil typically commented: 'We get to learn more because we can see it with our own eyes.'

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching to a good or better level and ensure rigour, pace and challenge in all lessons – satisfactory.
- Use assessment information systematically to build on what pupils already know – satisfactory.
- Provide an exciting, relevant curriculum which always motivates pupils to learn – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management continue to improve and the school's self-evaluation is more accurate and reliable. Staff have confirmed that morale has improved significantly and that the sense of teamwork and common purpose is growing. Senior leaders are becoming more confident and skilled in their roles and have undertaken more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. This has resulted in a clearer and more comprehensive analysis of performance data. This in turn has led to a sharper identification of the areas in need of improvement within teaching and learning. The governing body is becoming more effective in holding the school to account and better able to



support and challenge the school. Although it is too soon to see the full impact of the more rigorous monitoring procedures, leaders are beginning to increase the pace at which improvements are made and are now developing a more strategic and sharply focused plan for future improvement in the school.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Strengthen senior management and ensure that all leaders carry out rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to tackle underachievement – good.

External support

The school is continuing to benefit from the support provided by the local authority. However, the school's leaders are becoming increasingly proactive in targeting the focus of the guidance they receive.

Since the previous visit, improvements have been made to the safety of the fabric of the building, to the car parking areas and access to the road. The expertise and resources available from the local authority are being utilised effectively by the school. The school has very recently received a positive full health and safety audit from the local authority. Pupils spoken to by inspectors during the visit confirmed that they now feel safer in school.

