

Tribal Education
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 1234123
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0300 123 1231
Ofstedhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk

8 June 2010

Mrs V Arbon
Talbot Combined School
Talbot Drive
Wallisdown
Poole
Dorset
BH12 5ED

Dear Mrs Arbon

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Talbot Combined School

Following my visit with Hazel Callaghan, additional inspector, to your school on 25 and 26 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 January 2010. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

The school has been granted permission to appoint two newly qualified teachers. No further appointments of newly qualified teachers are to be made without the consent of the lead inspector.

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Dorset.

Yours sincerely

Susan Gadd
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Talbot Combined School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 May 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited 15 lessons, and scrutinised documents and pupils' work. They met with the two affiliated headteachers, other staff including members of the senior and middle management team, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been no major changes to staffing. The school is still being led by two affiliated headteachers who are currently sharing the role on a part-time basis. In September the governing body has agreed changes and one of the affiliated headteachers will lead the school full-time.

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

- The school is aware that the historical data used to judge progress and attainment throughout the school are on the whole inaccurate. Achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 national tests is based on incorrect data at the end of Key Stage 1. Steps have been taken since the last inspection to address this issue.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception with skills below those expected for their age, especially in language, communication and social skills and continue to make inadequate progress in all areas of learning.
- As a result of the changes since the last inspection, lesson observations indicate that pupils from Key Stage 1 to Year 7 are now beginning to make satisfactory progress. However, this progress is still inconsistent as pupils move through the school. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to those of their peers.
- There is evidence that pupils in Year 6 are now beginning to make good progress in mathematics as a result of targeted intervention.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

- Since the last inspection the school has developed an improving whole-school approach to behaviour. Pupils tell us that, as a result of this, behaviour has improved significantly. Lesson observations indicate that behaviour is now good in over 50% of lessons with no evidence of inadequate behaviour observed.
- Attendance currently is 93.7% which is below the national average for primary schools. The school is aware of this issue and is considering ways of addressing it.



- Pupils report that they feel safe in school and appreciate the improved security since the last inspection. They feel confident that they can always turn to an adult for support.

The effectiveness of provision

- Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Small pockets of inadequate progress remain within lessons but progress in lessons is now generally satisfactory, with some children making good progress. Improvements have been made in engaging pupils during lessons through the use of 'talk partners'. Lesson plans in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 now indicate pupils' 'intended learning' as well as stating clear success criteria. This enables pupils and staff to judge the amount of progress being made in lessons. In the strongest lessons, plans make reference to pupils' prior learning and tasks are set to meet the needs of individual pupils. However, this good practice is still at an early stage of development and therefore inconsistent throughout the school. As a consequence, able pupils are not always stretched in lessons as work is often too easy for them. While learning support staff are used well to aid pupils' learning during group work, inadequate use is made of them during the introduction to each lesson.
- To address the past discrepancies in assessment, the school has started a process of regular moderation meetings for staff. Staff training has also taken place to help improve staff knowledge in the area of target setting. However, it is still too early to see the full impact of this training on overall assessments or progress as pupils move through the school.
- Marking in books is improving and there are some good examples where teachers provide pupils with clear advice about how to improve their work. The improved target setting in English and numeracy provides pupils with valuable information about how to improve their work. This good practice in both areas requires more time to ensure greater consistency.
- An improved tracking system has been introduced since the last inspection and as a result teachers are more aware of pupils' attainment. This information is beginning to be used to plan for pupils who are underachieving. Regular progress meetings are now being held so that appropriate intervention can be considered.

Judgement

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement through rigorous systematic approaches to:
 - establish reliable, accurate assessments in all year groups – satisfactory
 - use information from assessments to plan lessons and adapt work to match the needs of all year groups of learners – satisfactory



- ensure that pupils receive useful advice and guidance about how to improve their work – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

- The two affiliated headteachers provide strong leadership and clear guidance on how the improvements will be managed.
- The leadership team have responded positively to the issues raised in the previous inspection. They have begun the process of developing important mechanisms to enable the school to improve its provision and outcomes for pupils. A detailed action plan accurately plots the progress required. As a result, a number of staff now have a clearer focus to make the changes required within the school and to develop the school's capacity to improve.
- Since the last inspection the role of the senior management team has been developed. Regular meetings are now focused on developing the school priorities and implementing the appropriate actions needed to bring about change. The literacy and numeracy managers have been involved in formal lesson observations. Other managers have also been involved effectively in developing assessment and target setting across the school.
- Managers at different levels have been engaged in supporting staff through training days as well as through reviewing planning and working alongside staff to develop consistency in practice. The full impact of these changes is still to be seen in pupils' outcomes.
- The Healthy Schools leader has been recently praised for the work she has led in gaining the Enhanced Healthy School Status. This work is considered by the local authority to be a good model for other schools to follow.
- The two affiliated headteachers have now completed a cycle of formal lesson observations. Staff report that the feedback from these observations has been informative and helped to develop the teaching and learning within the school.
- Since the last inspection the governing body has addressed the safeguarding issues raised. Risk assessments are now in place, the security of the school site has been improved and systems and procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

Judgement

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve all aspects of leadership and management by implementing the current plans put in place by the affiliated headteachers, particularly as they relate to:
 - developing management capacity through the school – satisfactory
 - the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the performance of staff to include informative feedback – satisfactory



- as a matter of urgency, ensure that the governing body fulfils its statutory duties relating to safeguarding – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The local authority has provided extensive support so that teachers within Reception are able to develop their own skills and knowledge. Due to staffing constraints this support is not yet having sufficient impact on improving the teaching and curriculum in this part of the school.
- Planning is still not sufficiently focused on building upon children's previous learning experiences. Instead, too much focus is given to activities rather than identification of what children should learn.
- Teachers and classroom assistants make regular observations of what children know, say and do, and are beginning to link this to the stages of learning. Overall, the judgements are still not accurate enough to ensure there is a good understanding of children's next steps in learning.
- Opportunities for children to consolidate learning in adult-led sessions are limited. This is particularly the case in mathematics and writing.
- Adult-led activities do not always cater for the range of capabilities and needs in the class.
- Insufficient attention is given to using and developing children's own interests to promote learning, or to model new ideas and ways of working so that children use them in their own activities and so develop effective learning skills.
- The classrooms are now organised so that each of the six areas of learning is given a focus and a range of resources are available to support this. Planning to ensure that these resources are used appropriately to inspire children to experiment and explore their ideas is still too limited.
- Since the last inspection, the outside area has been improved but the way in which it is used is still inadequate. It does not sufficiently reflect the learning activities inside the classroom or promote effective learning in general.
- Children are safe and well cared for. Appropriate risk assessments have been made of potential dangers, and appropriate measures have been put into place to ensure children's safety. The outside area is secure and a rota of supervision has been developed.

Judgement

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve provision, management and outcomes of the EYFS by:
 - developing management capacity in the EYFS – inadequate
 - ensuring that a strong well-resourced EYFS curriculum is provided – inadequate



- improving the quality of teaching and assessment – inadequate
- making sure pupils are safe at all times – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has revised its action plan and it now fulfils requirements. The impact of recent interventions in developing management capacity and teaching is evident. Despite the significant support given to the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress in this area remains inadequate. However, the school and authority have agreed an appropriate plan of action to address this issue.