

Tribal Education
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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



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Miss Lindsey Taylor
Headteacher
Broadlands Primary School
Prospect Walk
Tupsley
Hereford
HR1 1NZ

Dear Miss Taylor

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Broadlands Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 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 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 Director of Children's Services for Herefordshire.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hodgkinson
Additional Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Broadlands Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 2 March 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and senior team, teachers, a group of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority, who is also the School Improvement Partner. The inspector also had some informal discussions with parents in the playground.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the staffing, structure or context of the school since the previous visit.

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

Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 remains low overall, but pupils' progress and their quality of learning are steadily strengthening. The proportion of Year 6 pupils who are on track to obtain the nationally expected Level 4 or above in national tests in English and mathematics at the end of this year is, at this stage, on course to match that achieved in 2009. This marks an improvement in progress, since this year's Year 6 cohort had relatively weaker attainment on entry into Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 who are underachieving are now receiving intensive one-to-one support programmes. Early evaluations suggest that these programmes are successful in helping pupils reach the expected level. By the end of Key Stage 2, reading standards are broadly in line with the national average and attainment in mathematics continues to get closer to average. Writing remains the key weakness across the school. Nonetheless, a scrutiny of pupils' books suggests that for pupils in most years, basic literacy skills are generally secure. Pupils across the ability range form letters clearly, present work neatly, and give sound attention to sentence structure and punctuation. However, middle and higher attainers are not sufficiently ambitious in their writing; they are not always sufficiently challenged to show enough richness in their use of language when writing independently across all subjects.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and increase rates of progress for all pupils, particularly in writing in Key Stage 2 – satisfactory.



Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour continues to improve. It was good in all lessons observed on this inspection and, in the large majority of lessons, pupils demonstrated a real enthusiasm for learning. The pupils themselves report that relationships are much improved and that incidents of bullying are rare and much reduced. Pupils praise the effectiveness of the school council's campaign to promote healthy lifestyles, noting that it has had a positive influence on the choices pupils make for their lunches and snacks. Pupils' attendance is, however, a growing concern, because overall attendance is low and has declined steadily over the last three years. Low attendance does not prepare pupils well for their learning or for their later life, and makes it more difficult for the school to raise achievement.

The effectiveness of provision

That this is the second monitoring inspection in succession where no inadequate teaching was observed is a testament to the significant improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection. Lessons are typically well managed and pupils respond particularly well to well-organised practical work. For example, Year 3 pupils were thoroughly absorbed in developing their new skills in making prints for collographs on Indian myths. However, too much teaching is satisfactory rather than good at present. This is mainly because opportunities are too often missed to challenge and extend middle and higher attainers to move beyond secure basic skills, especially in their writing. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is generally accurate, thorough and constructive in setting out good expectations for presentation, punctuation and grammar. However, targets for middle and high attaining pupils continue to be poorly used to stretch these pupils and enrich the quality of their writing. Pupils' literacy targets are still not reviewed and revised regularly enough and, as a consequence, teachers' lesson planning pays too little account to ways in which middle and higher attainers can be moved on swiftly to more challenging tasks. Where teachers' expectations are high, pupils respond very positively to the challenges. For example, the teacher's very skilful questioning of Year 4 pupils enabled them to apply their technical and scientific vocabulary very precisely when explaining, during an experiment, how solids and liquids mix or separate.

More instances were evident on this monitoring inspection of teachers making effective links between subjects and enabling pupils to apply their literacy and skills across a range of interesting themes and topics. However, there remain examples in pupils' topic work where expectations for pupils' independent writing are too low, and where not enough attention is given to pupils' literacy targets in planning and marking this work.

The school continues to respond well to individual needs. In discussion with the inspector, parents provided examples of how prompt action by the school had



quickly resolved problems or secured appropriate support for individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language continue to receive effectively managed and well-coordinated support, including through some skilful work in the classroom by the teaching assistants.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good and better, making sure that assessments are accurate and that pupils' work is always matched well to their differing learning needs – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher has worked with clear vision and determination to develop the school's capacity for effective self-evaluation and improvement planning. Since the last monitoring inspection, she has worked particularly effectively with the school improvement partner to sharpen the school's analysis of its performance data, and to further develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of the wider senior leadership team. As a consequence, the leadership team is now better able to analyse performance data to identify which classes or groups of pupils are not making enough progress, and to follow this up with sharply diagnostic observations of teaching and learning, in order to identify what might be the cause of the problems. Additional support is now being targeted at the classes or groups most in need. It is too early at present for this specific support to have fully impacted on improving the overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Nonetheless, effective systems are now in place to drive such improvement.

Governors continue to develop confidence and expertise in supporting and challenging the school's performance. They are appropriately focused on ensuring that required policies are updated and actively used to inform practice. Vacancies on the governing body have now nearly all been filled. Governors engage very effectively with parents and community partners to keep them informed about the school's progress, and to give parents plenty of opportunities to have their say.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels, establishing a greater sense of urgency and ensuring that actions are evaluated rigorously against pupils' rates of progress and the standards they achieve – good.

External support

The school improvement partner has worked particularly effectively since the previous monitoring inspection to develop the skills of the senior team to interpret



data and to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This has markedly strengthened the school's internal capacity to drive improvement. Local authority literacy and numeracy consultants have given the school's teachers and managers intensive and well-focused support during the term to improve the quality of provision.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of writing of middle and higher attaining pupils by:
 - ensuring that pupils' literacy targets are regularly reviewed and are always sufficiently challenging
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work which is consistently well matched to the capabilities of these pupils
 - ensuring that pupils consistently receive sufficiently demanding writing tasks, linked to their literacy targets, in topic work and work in subjects across the curriculum.

- Take action to improve pupils' attendance.