

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 Direct email: gtunnickliffe@cftb.com

24 September 2010

Miss S Hawke
Great Coates Primary School
Crosland Rd
Grimsby
Lincolnshire
DN37 9EN

Dear Miss Hawke

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Great Coates Primary School

Following my visit with Katrina Gueli HMI to your school on 22–23 September 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Lowery
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010

- Improve achievement and raise standards of attainment for all pupils, particularly writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information to support their planning and delivery of lessons
 - making lessons challenging, particularly for the more-able pupils
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write independently and at length
 - marking work effectively so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they could do better.
- Ensure that leaders and managers take swift and effective action to improve provision, particularly teaching by:
 - rigorously monitoring and developing the quality of teaching and learning to ensure both are at least consistently good
 - holding teachers to account for the progress of all pupils in their classes.
- Ensure that the governing body:
 - monitors and evaluates the work of the school and holds staff to account for the standards achieved
 - promotes community cohesion by extending the school's links with diverse communities locally, nationally and globally.

Special measures: monitoring of Great Coates Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 September 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including eight lessons and observed all of the teachers. They scrutinised documents and conducted an intensive scrutiny of pupils' work in literacy and numeracy. Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum coordinators, groups of Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, the Deputy Director of Learning for North East Lincolnshire and the local authority's Recovery Manager who is supporting the work of the school.

Context

Since the last inspection, there has been a reorganisation of senior staff with the creation of a senior leadership team. An additional middle leader has been seconded to the school by the local authority. Four teachers have left and one new teacher has been appointed. At the time of the monitoring inspection interviews were being arranged for the final teaching vacancy. From September 2010, all pupils are organised into single-age classes and intake numbers to Reception have risen. The school is currently operating a budget surplus.

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

There has been no significant improvement in achievement since the last inspection. Results from the Key Stage 2 testing of Year 6 pupils in 2010 confirm that standards attained were broadly in line with the national average. At Key Stage 1, attainment declined in 2010 over that achieved in 2009. This continues the declining trend in attainment at the end of Year 2 since 2007. School data show that pupils' attainment in reading has declined, in mathematics it has rapidly declined, while in writing attainment remained similar to that in 2009.

For the older pupils the proportion attaining Level 4+ in English declined, while in mathematics it rose and in science it remained static. Attainment for the more able rose in English but declined in mathematics and science. Key Stage 2 results were below target. Inspection evidence identified that more secure progress is being made in writing but, for too many pupils, progress in mathematics and science is below that expected.

Teaching continues to have insufficient impact on securing improvement in pupils' achievement. During the monitoring visit progress was inadequate in around 40% of lessons observed across Key Stages 1 and 2. However, better progress was observed in Year 5 and 6 classes.

Despite an increased focus on pupils in Year 6, the school's predictions for results in 2011, supported by an analysis of the quality of pupils' work seen by inspectors, indicate that standards of attainment are worryingly low for this group of pupils.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve achievement and raise standards of attainment for all pupils, particularly writing and mathematics – inadequate

The effectiveness of provision

The local authority's statement of action and attached milestones anticipated that all teaching would be at least satisfactory by June 2010. This target has been missed. There remain significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching and this continues to have a negative impact on pupils' achievement.

Since the last inspection the school has fostered an increased professional dialogue about pupils' learning. Staff are keen and are working hard to address any gaps in teaching skills. Following a programme of training, the quality of marking and the feedback given to pupils on how they can improve their work have been strengthened. All staff are now using a common format to plan their lessons, although some give insufficient attention to planning how all pupils can make progress. Target-setting is now sharper and pupils have an improved understanding of what levels they should be achieving in their writing. The strongest aspect of teaching is the preparation teachers put into designing group-work activities. Here, pupils, who are always keen to learn, enjoy the opportunity to work with their peers and to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning.

Weaknesses in teaching remain similar to that outlined in the last inspection report. Work is frequently not pitched at the right level. The school recognises it needs to make progress in challenging the more able. Teachers continue to talk at pupils for too long. As a result, pupils' concentration drops, some become bored and this significantly slows their pace of learning. The use of assessment to inform planning and to check pupils' understanding remains particularly underdeveloped. Too frequently the teaching of mathematics concentrates on learning by repetition rather than ensuring pupils understand and can apply mathematical skills.

There is insufficient understanding of what constitutes good or better teaching. Consequently, too many staff are unclear as to whether their teaching is strong enough to improve pupils' learning rapidly. While teaching is steadily improving, it is not doing so fast enough to enable pupils to catch up on existing gaps in their understanding.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the previous inspection a new senior leadership team has been formed. Its members are clearly focused on school improvement and are resolved to tackle weaknesses in provision in order to raise attainment. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and appreciates what steps need to be taken to secure improvements. However, insufficient attention has been given to the rate of change that is required, in particular in raising the standard of teaching across the school.

The headteacher has taken a number of initial steps to improve the quality of teaching. Four staff have moved on from the school and new appointments to the teaching staff continue to be made. Responsibilities have been reviewed, with two staff now focused on improving literacy and numeracy. These roles need developing to ensure that an emphasis is placed on training and monitoring the quality of provision. Key links have been established with other schools to strengthen partnership work and to share expertise on aspects of teaching.

Policies on learning and progress, monitoring and behaviour management have been written or updated. Inspectors noted how staff consistently use the school behaviour management system to good effect.

Systems to monitor the quality of teaching have been established. Formal lesson observations are currently carried out by the headteacher only and the process is heavily dependant on local authority support. The headteacher has appropriate skills to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. An enquiry-based system has also been established to review aspects of teaching and learning. However, the impact of this work is not yet apparent.

The school improvement plan has been revised, but this needs to be carefully aligned with the statement for action. Milestones are insufficiently defined and it is not clear who is responsible for monitoring and evaluation.

The governing body's response to the weaknesses outlined in the inspection report has been slow. This has been compounded by a period of uncertainty over its membership and leadership. The committee structure has been revised including establishing a group to oversee the future development of the school. However, these changes have not yet had a discernable impact on addressing the weaknesses in the school. The local authority has announced its intention to create an Interim Executive Board to take over the responsibilities of governance.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Ensure that leaders and managers take swift and effective action to improve provision, particularly teaching – satisfactory
- Ensure that the governing body monitors and evaluates the work of the school, and promotes community cohesion – inadequate

External support

The local authority's statement of action correctly identifies the priorities required for school improvement. The statement is not yet aligned with the school improvement plan and some key milestones are insufficiently defined and over-optimistic. Systems for monitoring and evaluation lack precision.

An extensive package of external assistance has been arranged by the local authority including a recovery manager, consultant support and recently the services of a National Leader in Education. Appropriate links with partner schools have also been brokered. The school has welcomed the external support it is receiving.

Priorities for further improvement

Priorities remain those identified at the time of the last inspection.