

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 0117 3115319

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 0117 3150430

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct email: matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com

26 September 2011

Nathalie Bull
Headteacher
William Morris Primary School
Recreation Way
Mitcham
Surrey
CR4 1PJ

Dear Ms Bull

Special measures: monitoring inspection of William Morris Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 and 23 September 2011, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

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 Merton.

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - increasing the level of challenge and expecting more from the pupils in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils have as many opportunities as possible to gain fluency in writing in a range of subjects
 - reducing the use of worksheets.
- Improve the quality of pupils' learning and raise the quality of teaching by:
 - implementing a programme of rigorous and frequent classroom observations
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are effectively deployed to promote learning
 - improving the consistency and quality of marking, to ensure that all pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - expecting all adults to provide stimulating questioning to enable the children to use language effectively
 - planning activities that start from the children's own interests
 - providing richer and more varied learning experiences with greater opportunities for children to explore the natural environment.
- Take more robust action to improve the attendance of pupils overall and particularly of the small minority of persistent absentees.

Special measures: monitoring of William Morris Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 22–23 September 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation. He met with the executive headteacher and other members of the leadership team, a member of the governing body, a group of pupils and the local authority School Improvement Partner.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection of May 2011 the governing body has entered into a hard federation and merged with the governing body of the nearby Singlegate Primary School. A permanent associate headteacher and Early Years Foundation Stage leader (who is also the assistant headteacher) are now in post and, together with the executive headteacher, comprise the senior leadership team. The Year 4 teacher left at the end of the previous academic year and a new teacher has been recruited for this year group. As a result of restructuring, the number of teaching assistants has been reduced significantly. The number of pupils on roll has risen to 240 as a result of the opening of a second Reception class.

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

Pupils' attainment in mathematics and reading by the end of Year 6 has improved considerably as indicated by the National Test results in July 2011. Attainment is accelerating in reading and mathematics and, to a lesser extent, also in writing, where pupils' progress has been improved by the school's dynamic approach and skilful use of pupils' widespread enthusiasm for reading as a springboard to improvements elsewhere. For example, linking themes and topics to each class's chosen inspirational leader is giving a new impetus to the promotion of writing.

Much improved teaching in the current Year 6 is providing these pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to make accelerated progress in writing and narrow the gap with national standards. For example, all Year 6 pupils made excellent progress when they used detailed success criteria to edit and improve a piece of writing. Pupils' enjoyment was evident, they were engrossed in the task and all made accelerated progress as a result. The more able pupils were appropriately challenged, such as when they were asked to insert embedded clauses into their sentences. Although the level and depth of challenge in lessons has improved as a result of sharper planning and the use of greater opportunities to write in other subjects and less use of worksheets, provision for more-able pupils is not always thought through well enough. As a result, these pupils' attainment is still not strong enough. School leaders are aware and working well to address this.

Judgement

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics – good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils cooperate well and play safely with one another and are polite to staff and visitors. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good and the older pupils are very positive role models. This is true of both their commitment to study as well as their contribution to the school ethos. Teachers' careful planning, coupled with appropriately timed soothing background music in a learning-rich environment, ensures that pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. In addition, daily thought provoking assemblies are very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils say how much they enjoy coming to school because of opportunities within the curriculum that make learning more interesting. Further evidence of this can be seen in the significantly improved attendance of pupils and very few incidences of persistent absence. The importance of good attendance continues to be strongly promoted and impressive partnership work with the education welfare officer has resulted in a substantial reduction in authorised absences.

Judgement

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Take more robust action to improve the attendance of pupils overall and particularly of the minority of persistent absentees – good

The effectiveness of provision

There have been considerable improvements in the quality of teaching since the last monitoring visit. Teachers have embraced change and have been effectively supported in improving their practice. They are increasingly confident and ambitious to improve as evidenced by the greater emphasis on the development of engaging and carefully structured learning activities with the onus on pupils to drive learning forward. Consequently, pupils are far more engaged and teachers are enjoying their teaching. Suitable training has also been provided for teaching assistants, and their capacity to support pupils effectively is growing.

In the best lessons it is evident that the teacher and teaching assistant have planned together effectively to tailor the learning so that it specifically meets individual need. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson less-able pupils were able to put together a comic strip story using a structured plan as a guide, prompted by their enthusiastic teacher using pictures and speech bubbles. Pupils' enjoyment was evident, they

were engrossed in the task and all made accelerated progress as a result. This lesson was typical of where learning and progress were most effective. In such lessons assessment information is used deftly to plan activities that are well matched to individual pupils' needs and there is a strong focus on the quality of learning.

In a minority of less effective lessons, activities are still not sufficiently focused enough on what and how the teacher wants the pupils to learn. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to clarify their expectations or explain the most effective way to tackle a learning activity. Consequently, achievement is not always maximised because pupils lack clarity with regard to success criteria and/or misconceptions are allowed to develop. School leaders are aware of this continuing weakness because the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching is rigorous.

The quality of marking is improving and is increasingly consistent, supported in English by the sharper use of writing targets. Pupils clearly understand the system and it is usually well implemented by teachers. Pupils say how much they enjoy the chance to engage in a dialogue about their work and respond to teachers' comments through correcting and revisiting work in the light of identified next steps. However, the opportunity to do this is not yet offered consistently across year groups.

The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is modelling outstanding practice in this setting. Well-planned and purposeful free flow activities are a significant feature of the daily curriculum diet that the children experience. As a result, adults in the setting are using children's interests as a stimulus to develop their language and communication skills, and there is better use of questioning. This is significantly improving children's communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The renovation of the outdoor area is almost complete and, with a designated sensory area and garden, is designed to give children greater opportunities to explore the natural environment.

Judgement

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of pupils' learning and raise the quality of teaching – good
- Improve the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive headteacher has an excellent understanding of the school and its key priorities. Her expert and energetic leadership allied with the stability and confidence that she brings ensures that pupils' overall achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning continues to improve. Her effective partnership with the governing body has ensured that the restructuring of teaching assistants was undertaken systematically and efficiently. Senior leaders have grown in confidence

and established a stronger position from which to carry out their leadership roles, and provide clear direction and focus on school improvement based upon accurate data. Leaders and the governing body are aware of the progress they have made and are fully involved in reviewing the action plans, in which progress against key performance targets is regularly monitored and evaluated. All the performance indicators, supported by lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books, indicate that rapid gains have been made in pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics and reading. This reflects the underlying culture and philosophy of the school's leadership which is relentlessly focused on raising pupils' achievement. The school is now well poised to make further rapid gains in both children's and pupils' attainment and progress.

External support

The school has worked well in partnership with the local authority. Support has been targeted at where it is most needed and the local authority's interventions are helping the school to improve. For example, the authority has funded the refurbishment of the hall and the renovation of the early years setting, resulting in impressive enhancements to children's and pupils' learning environment. The School Improvement Partner continues to provide effective support and challenge, particularly with regard to evaluating the impact of initiatives to improve outcomes and quality of provision.