

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0121 679 9161  
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com



12 December 2014

Barbara Carter  
Headteacher  
Rood End Primary School  
Rood End Road  
Oldbury  
B68 8SQ

Dear Mrs Carter

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Rood End Primary School**

Following my visit with Joan Williamson, Associate Inspector, to your school on 2–3 December 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2014. 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.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Sandwell.

Yours sincerely  
Rachel Howie  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
  - making sure that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - placing an increased emphasis on improving pupils' skills in English and mathematics and giving pupils more opportunity to apply these skills across different subjects
  - using assessment information to set work at the right level of difficulty to challenge different ability groups, so that learning moves at a faster pace
  - improving the teaching of phonics so that pupils learn to read well and are able to apply their skills to developing their spelling and writing.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - checking frequently and rigorously that all pupils are making good progress in all subjects, and making sure that teachers are challenged about underperformance in their class
  - ensuring that systems for managing teachers' performance are robust and that staff are made accountable for meeting challenging performance targets relating to pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
  - including clear measures of success in the school's improvement plans to help leaders and governors evaluate how well teaching is improving and how much progress pupils are making
  - identifying more effective measures to tackle persistent absence and improve attendance to at least the national average
  - ensuring that governors have the expertise to hold the school rigorously to account.

Ofsted has made recommendations to the authority responsible for the school on governance. This will include an external review of governance.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2–3 December 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documents. Three of the lessons observed during the monitoring inspection were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition to this, the inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, four representatives from the governing body and a local authority representative. Inspectors also spoke to groups of pupils and talked to some parents at the beginning of the school day.

### **Context**

Since the first monitoring inspection, five teachers have been appointed. Three middle leaders have been appointed: one to focus on the impact of the sports premium funding, one to lead on the improvement of phonics (the sounds that letters make), and one to lead on the provision for pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English. A new Vice Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The end of year test results and assessments from 2014 show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving. Pupils in Year 6 made particularly good progress as a result of good and outstanding teaching. However, this was still insufficient to make up for previous weak teaching. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels remains well below the national average. Similarly, at the end of Year 2, improvements are apparent. However, pupils' attainment remains well below the national average for this age group.

At the end of Early Years Foundation Stage, an increased proportion of pupils reached the level of development that is expected. Many pupils arrive in Nursery with skills and abilities well below that typically expected for their age. As a result of improving teaching, an increasing proportion are making good progress. However, over half the children were not at the level expected to be ready to start Year 1 at the end of 2014.

The teaching of phonics has improved. As a result, pupils are learning their sounds more quickly and are starting to make better progress in their reading. The results from the most recent phonics check in Year 1 show a significant improvement on the previous year, and almost all of the pupils who had to resit the test in Year 2 achieved the standard required.

The progress of pupils currently in the school is improving. Notably in Year 6, effective teaching is leading to pupils making rapid progress in all subjects. Individual tuition is also supporting this acceleration of learning. The targets that

have been set for the current Year 6 pupils are challenging and, if they are met, the gap between pupils at Rood End and their counterparts in other schools will have closed significantly. However, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done to ensure that pupils are well equipped to meet these targets.

The progress of pupils in other year groups is variable. An increasing number of pupils are making the progress that is expected and some are making good progress, but this varies between year groups, classes and subjects. Particularly in mathematics, the lower ability pupils are not making the progress they are capable of because too often work is either too easy for them to be able to learn something new or too hard for them to complete.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is improving. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and an increasing proportion is now good. Evidence from the inspection and from the senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching shows that teachers are applying to their lessons what they have learned from training sessions and coaching. As a result, pupils are now making better progress than in the past. However, teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make rapid enough progress to catch up on previously lost ground.

All staff understand the importance of having high expectations of pupils and of providing work that builds on what pupils already know. Some teachers are skilled at setting work that is at the right level of difficulty and realise quickly within lessons when pupils are ready to move on to something new. However, in many classes, particularly in mathematics, pupils are given tasks that are either too hard or too easy, and this prevents enough progress being made and slows down the rate at which pupils will catch up with peers in other schools. In some classes, teachers do not plan carefully enough the order in which pupils should learn things. This means that pupils learn something new in one lesson but then do not build on it in future lessons and often go back to doing something easier. Ensuring that pupils are set work at the right level of challenge remains a high priority for the school.

Teachers and teaching assistants understand that marking should help pupils to move on in their learning. All staff are using the new marking guidance and symbols appropriately. However, the quality of the advice given to pupils is variable between classes and subject. Marking in English books is generally more helpful than in mathematics books. For example, in English books, spellings and grammar are corrected and pupils are required to write out their incorrect spellings and learn them. In the best examples, pupils are also given precise guidance on how to make improvements to their work. In mathematics, however, the advice or tasks provided do not enable pupils to improve.

Teaching assistants generally provide effective support for pupils within lessons and in small-group activities. This is because they are clear about the purpose of the learning and understand what pupils need to learn by the end of the activity. Particularly effective practice was observed during the inspection of teaching assistants supporting pupils with little or no English.

The teaching of phonics has improved and is generally consistent and effective. Pupils are grouped carefully according to their ability, and daily lessons are brisk paced and interesting. There is still some work to be done to ensure that pupils have a broad range of support; for example, displays to support them and help them to use the sounds they have learned when they are working on their own.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

In lessons, pupils are positive about their learning and show a desire to learn new things. Even when learning is too easy or too slow, most pupils continue to pay attention and volunteer to answer questions. Occasionally, some pupils lose concentration; however, a quick reminder from the adult regains their attention. Playtimes and lunchtimes are busy and pupils are active. They play together well and are keen to look after one another if a trip or fall occurs during a game. In corridors, pupils walk quietly and sensibly between lessons and to the playground when they are supervised by an adult. However, unsupervised, the older pupils, particularly, do not demonstrate self-discipline and often run and are boisterous.

Pupils say they feel safe at school and that adults expect them to behave well. Pupils and parents who spoke to inspectors are not concerned about bullying and say that they trust grown-ups to deal with any issues that arise.

Attendance is improving. This is because there are robust systems to follow up on any absence. Those pupils who are absent regularly are tracked carefully and, where necessary letters are sent home, meetings are held with parents and home visits are conducted. There are rewards and incentives to encourage pupils to attend regularly. As a result, the number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing. There is no system in place to track the number of pupils who are late for school. As a result, school leaders are not able to identify any trends or patterns in punctuality.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The senior leaders are united in their drive and determination to ensure that pupils make better progress and to have the school removed from special measures as quickly as possible. Senior leaders have a broadly accurate view of the school's areas of strength and weakness. The school improvement plan has been revised and is now fit for purpose. The plan clearly states what actions need to be taken to improve the quality of teaching and help pupils to make better progress. The plan also states how the success of actions will be measured.

Senior leaders and teachers have been set appropriately challenging targets relating to pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. It is clear how these targets will be measured and training is in place where necessary to ensure that teachers have an appropriate level of support in order to meet their targets.

Leaders frequently monitor the quality of teaching by observing lessons, scrutinising books, analysing pupils' progress information and talking to pupils. As a result, they have a broadly accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. However, on occasions, a judgement about teaching is made without sufficient evidence available in pupils' books to ensure that it is entirely accurate.

Teaching is improving because leaders are providing clear and precise advice to teachers after making their checks on teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants have also benefited from an effective range of training and support. For example, training provided by a local authority consultant has resulted in a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Additional external help is sought where leaders assess that it is required. For example, teachers have benefited from the opportunities to observe good practice and have worked alongside consultants to plan and deliver lessons. Improvements have been made as a result.

Governors remain committed to improving the school as quickly as possible. An external review of governance has been completed and governors have responded quickly to the recommendations. An action plan has been developed to strategically plan out the actions to be taken to improve the governing body. An audit of governors' skills and expertise has been completed and some governors are visiting the school more regularly to find out about the improvements being made. These visits are helpful in enabling the governors to find out for themselves how the school is improving. However, they do not have a precise enough focus to enable governors to have a detailed understanding of the key areas for improvement. Governors are also requesting additional information from the headteacher and are asking more challenging questions during meetings. The governing body have a much better understanding of pupils' progress than at the time of the last monitoring inspection and they understand how the school compares to others nationally.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing a good range of effective support. The school improvement adviser is knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. He visits the school regularly and quality assures the work of the senior leaders. His reports provide helpful advice for senior leaders. The statement of action has been amended and now provides a clear overview of the support that will be provided and how the school will be held to account during the journey out of special measures. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from the support

provided for the teaching of phonics. Support is also being provided for teachers new to the profession and for those whose practice requires improvement.

The senior leaders are proactive in sourcing a range of external consultants to support the improvements they are making; for example, working with local schools to moderate writing assessments and engaging a consultant to coach the middle leaders. This is increasing the capacity of the leadership team to make rapid improvements. However, leaders and governors have not yet fully assessed the impact of this work.