

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

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

**Direct T** 01696 566857

**Direct F** 01695 729320

**Direct email:** jkinsman@cfbt.com



13 March 2015

Mrs T Southward  
Headteacher  
Normanton Junior School  
Church Lane  
Normanton  
West Yorkshire  
WF6 1EY

Dear Mrs Southward

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Normanton Junior School**

Following my visit with Susan Twaits, Additional Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 March 2015, 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2013. 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 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield and as below.

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2013**

#### **Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in order to raise pupils' attainment, particularly in writing, by making sure that:**

- work given to pupils always matches their varying needs and abilities and that all groups of pupils are effectively challenged, particularly the more-able
- all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and pupils are clear about what is expected of them so that they can reach their potential
- teachers' marking always gives pupils clear and specific information about how to improve their writing skills
- teachers give pupils more opportunities to improve their writing
- teachers make sure that pupils have the chance to become actively involved in lessons and to complete tasks on their own; this is to help them maintain concentration and interest
- teachers insist that pupils produce writing to the highest standards of which they are capable and that they always present their work well.

#### **Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:**

- developing the skills of senior leaders and extending the role of subject leader to more staff so that there is a shared approach to evaluating the school's performance, improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement
- making sure that school improvement plans focus clearly and precisely on how the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement will be improved
- ensuring that plans made for developing pupils' skills do not mean that pupils repeat what they already know and can do as they move through the school
- undertaking an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved
- providing the necessary training to develop the roles and skills of governors so that they are fully involved in driving improvement and know exactly how to hold the school to account
- making sure arrangements for managing the performance of staff are fully in place so that staff are held to account for pupils' achievement and are well supported in bringing about improvement.

## **Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 11 to 12 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed teaching and pupils' behaviour in lessons and at informal times during the school day. They looked at pupils' work with the leadership team and scrutinised documents. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the leadership team, teachers, groups of pupils, parents, the three members the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative from the local authority. They also met with the chief executive officer of the academy trust the school is due to join.

### **Context**

A new headteacher was appointed in January. This is the school's fourth headteacher since it was placed in special measures. A lead practitioner for teaching also joined the school in January. A new leadership team has been established. One teacher has left the school and a temporary teacher appointed. The school is due to become an academy as part of Waterton Academy Trust.

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

After a long and turbulent journey, the local authority has secured a long-term solution to the leadership of the school. The newly appointed headteacher has risen to the challenge and quickly gathered an accurate view of where the school is at. Staff, pupils and parents speak of their confidence in this headteacher to make a difference and are optimistic about the future management of the school as part of the Waterton Academy Trust.

The changes in leadership over the last five terms have hampered progress, as each new leader seeks to make positive change and establish a new/different vision for the school. The headteacher has reviewed and revised systems and procedures for improving teaching and increased the rigour and robustness of the checks made. She has quickly rallied her newly formed leadership team, so that they are making an increasing contribution to school improvement. Although the team are able to talk animatedly about the actions they are taking, they do not focus strongly enough on what impact these actions have on pupils' learning and progress.

Leaders have re-focused their energies on the areas for improvement and produced a new, short-term action plan with clear targets and appropriate actions detailing who will do what, where and when. Leaders know what success should look like, but the plan does not include measurable outcomes for pupils' achievement. The headteacher has found some assessments of pupils' achievement unreliable. Consequently, leaders have taken action to establish an accurate baseline from which to measure pupils' progress and to hold teachers to account.

The headteacher's self-evaluation is accurate. She recognises the improvements seen in teaching and pupils' behaviour over time, but realises these improvements

have not been fast enough to ensure that standards are as high as they need to be. There are indications of acceleration in the pace of improvements since she became headteacher, such as the improvement seen in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The recently appointed newly qualified teachers are extremely positive about the ways in which leaders have helped them to develop their teaching. They have received effective training from the support school, but unfortunately the absence of one of these teachers has somewhat slowed this progress. Over time, the school has been heavily reliant on this external support to improve teaching, but the headteacher is determined that her leadership team must now lead these improvements and prove their effectiveness.

The IEB makes appropriate checks and has a clear view of the school's progress. Nevertheless, the recording of challenge in the minutes of meetings is not sharp enough. For example, the challenge for a recent report about the use and impact of pupil premium is not evident, despite data indicating that the achievement gaps are widening for these pupils. From its early checks, the IEB is confident in the ability of the headteacher to take the school forward. Plans are well established to secure a governing body.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teachers have improved their management of pupils' behaviour. This has led to positive relationships and better attitudes to learning for all pupils. A review of the effectiveness of marking and feedback has led to a more manageable approach to marking. Pupils say they value this approach and the time they have to reflect on their work. This has had a notable impact on the composition and style of pupils' writing.

The teaching of writing is much improved and has been a focus of development for the leadership team. There is a better sequence of teaching leading to more opportunities to write at length. Pupils are writing with increasing confidence and independence. Teachers have higher expectations and there is evidence of higher quality writing in pupils' work and displays around school. However, teachers do not always bring basic spelling and punctuation errors to the pupils' attention. Nor do they establish clear expectations of pupils' writing, so that pupils can check for themselves. This results in a continuation of errors. Marking in reading and mathematics is less effective.

Some aspects of the teaching of reading are improving as a result of recent training on effective questioning. Adults are better at probing and challenging pupils' thinking and understanding. They are helping pupils to develop the language of explanation, but pupils struggle because their use of vocabulary is limited. Leaders have recognised the deficiencies in the school's guided reading strategy and have stopped the timetabled sessions. Pupils' written comprehension is not purposeful or challenging enough. Leaders have not yet considered how to teach reading

effectively across the school. Inspectors highlighted inaccuracy in the assessment of the least able pupils, which means they are reading books that are too hard. In some classes, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of what they read through what they write.

In mathematics, many teachers are struggling with the expectations of the new curriculum, as well as having to address significant gaps in pupils' prior learning. Not all teachers take account of what pupils can and cannot do, and, more importantly, what they do and do not understand. This results in some pupils struggling with the work they are given; for others, there is not enough challenge, particularly for the most able. In some instances, expectations of what the less able pupils can do, is too low. The way teachers build a sequence of lessons does not enable pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills and explore concepts in other mathematical areas and related real-life situations. Where teaching is most effective, pupils do make better progress.

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

Leaders have made further improvements to behaviour through a newly introduced behaviour system that is understood by all and implemented consistently. There are fewer disruptions and exclusions have decreased. The majority of lessons run smoothly and those pupils with behaviour issues are supported well by learning mentors and classroom support assistants. Thus, pupils' attitudes to learning are improving. Pupils show an interest in their work and are trying hard to improve. They are willing to share ideas, work co-operatively in pairs and groups, when requested, and listen attentively to the teacher and to the views of others.

There is an increasing positive ethos around the school and all pupils show respect and courtesy to visitors and each other. Pupils enjoy their break and lunchtimes now because they are well supervised and have fun activities to play. Parents and pupils are very positive about these changes.

Bullying incidences are decreasing and most pupils are aware of what bullying means and all the forms it takes. They feel listened to and have confidence that adults in school listen to them. The school takes its caring role seriously. Staff record incidences and the actions they take rigorously. Pupils say they feel safe and because of the teaching and care they receive, they are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the Internet.

Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and is improving over time. Similarly, persistent absence is decreasing. This is because pupils feel safe and are enjoying school more and more.

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

Pupils' achievement is clearly linked to the quality of teaching. Where teaching and intervention is effective, achievement is now improving strongly and gaps are closing. However, there is still substantial catch-up needed in Year 6 to address historical underachievement. The leadership team are playing their part by teaching English and mathematics in this year group each day. There is strong evidence that this is helping the less able pupils to catch up quickly in writing and mathematics, but not in reading. Although the attainment of pupils is coming into line with what is seen nationally, too few are exceeding the progress expected from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1.

There are indications that recent actions are now moving pupils forward, particularly in writing. Nevertheless, across school there are still gaps in achievement for boys, pupils with special needs and disadvantaged pupils.

## **External support**

The local authority and IEB agree that a number of factors such as, the inability to secure quickly the leadership of the school and changes to the membership of the IEB and those who monitor the progress of the school, have contributed to the slowing of the school's progress over time. The effect of this can be seen in the achievement gaps for older pupils which are only just starting to close.

The local authority has increased the frequency of the support and checks it makes. The School Improvement Adviser provides weekly support for the new headteacher. Together, they have gathered an accurate view of where the school is at. In addition, the performance review committee, which includes senior officers from the local authority, checks on and challenges leaders about the impact of their actions on the school's progress. Nevertheless, at this point, there is little written evaluation of the impact of the actions being taken.

Both Walton Primary Academy and Normanton Common Primary School, in the Waterton Academy Trust, continue to provide effective support for teaching and leadership.