

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



17 November 2015

Mrs Carrie Henderson
Burrowmoor Primary School
Burrowmoor Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 9RP

Dear Mrs Henderson

Special measures monitoring inspection of Burrowmoor Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 and 21 October 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2015.

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

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures

The Trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plans are fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2015

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to good or better by:
 - planning work that provides the right level of challenge
 - giving pupils clear guidance through feedback about how to improve their work
 - making better use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning
 - giving the teaching of writing a stronger focus in the Reception year.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring all staff have high expectations for pupils
 - improving the rigour of checks on teaching and learning to identify and tackle weaknesses promptly
 - improving the effectiveness of all staff with allocated responsibilities and the governing body, in monitoring provision and securing the necessary improvement
 - making better use of the pupil premium to provide the right support for disadvantaged pupils and then checking the effect of this support more closely.

- Improve pupils' behaviour and the presentation of their work by:
 - ensuring that all adults manage behaviour consistently well in lessons and at playtimes
 - helping pupils understand the importance of good behaviour
 - ensuring that pupils always try hard and present their work neatly.

External reviews of governance and the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 October 2015

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the head of school, the executive headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the sponsor Trust, senior leaders, other teachers, and pupils. Visits were made to all classes, and included an examination of some of the pupils' work. The Trust's statement of action and the school's action plans were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has left the school and the deputy headteacher has been appointed to the post of head of school. A number of other teachers have left the school and been replaced. Two new phase leaders have been appointed. A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed to replace the previous Chair.

Outcomes for pupils

Standards at the end of Year 6 declined this year to below average overall. The gap widened between the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils who gained the higher level 5 was also below average. At the end of Year 2, standards were similar to last year, but the gap has widened between the pupils in the school and others because national standards have risen. Pupils' main weakness was in reading. The gap between the standards of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is too wide. However, in Year 1 the proportion gaining the expected standard in the phonics test has risen to above average. The proportion making a good level of development has nearly doubled, but remains below average.

The proportion of pupils making the expected progress in Key Stage 2 is broadly similar to that seen nationally. However, it is evident in school that the quality of work and the progress made by pupils varies widely depending on which class they are in.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are over-dependent on adult support. The head of school reported that the quality of their work and behaviour deteriorates when they are not supported by an adult.

Pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding that are proving to be a hindrance to the development of their number and literacy skills. Pupils in Years 5

and 6 were observed either having difficulty with spellings or the connections between numbers that you would expect them to know at the age they are.

The impact of improvements to the teaching of phonics is evident in lessons; pupils demonstrate that they are using their phonics skills more confidently when reading unfamiliar words.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is not improving fast enough, particularly in Reception Year and Years 1, 3, 4 and 5. The main weaknesses are that teachers lack subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics, and do not have high enough expectations of what constitutes good teaching and learning. Some have been able to visit an outstanding primary school to observe good practice, but it does not appear to have had a significant impact on their teaching. Leaders, the Trust and governors have been successful in eradicating the weakest teaching. In addition, there is better-quality teaching in the Nursery and across classes in Years 2 and 6. Here, needs are better met because teachers use the information that they have about pupils to plan lessons that are pitched at the right level for them.

When marking pupils' work, a number of teachers do not use the information that they gain from this activity to decide on what the appropriate next steps are; nor do they use this information well enough when planning future lessons. They are more concerned with moving pupils on so that the curriculum is covered rather than ensuring that the pupils have learned what has been taught. For example, pupils are left with misconceptions in mathematics that are not addressed because the teacher has moved on to a different topic. This also means that most-able pupils do not receive work that is appropriately challenging.

The quality of pupils' work in some books shows that their presentation and writing skills are not being paid sufficient attention. The mathematics lessons do not address the new requirements to develop fluency, reasoning and problem-solving well enough.

In most lessons, teachers are supported by other adults. There are approximately 35 teaching assistants working in the school. It is often unclear what their impact on learning is. This was commented on at the last inspection and has not been addressed well enough since then.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Since the last inspection, the school has implemented a new behaviour policy and procedures. The pupils spoken to believe that this is making a difference and behaviour is improving. They like the new behaviour management system because it means that they are not allowed 'to get away with things'. There are, however, still groups of pupils in lessons who do not concentrate hard enough on their work or who lack resilience when tackling difficult tasks and are observed giving up. Pupils chat off-task to others or swing back on their chairs when this happens.

Pupils report that there are still problems on a regular basis when they play football on the playground. One pupil sensibly suggested that this was because they had no referees or judges presiding over the games.

Pupils continue to talk with enthusiasm about activities such as the after-school clubs that they all take part in and the trips and residential visits that are an important part of their education.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior and middle leaders do not have the capacity to improve teaching and learning because of a lack of experience and training. Leaders and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what constitutes good leadership and teaching, and consequently the teaching and outcomes for pupils are not improving fast enough.

The school's procedures for managing the performance of teachers have had little impact on improving teaching across the school and have not been implemented with sufficient urgency. Since September, only the head of school has been subject to appraisal arrangements. The other senior leaders and middle leaders will be expected to carry out the appraisal of staff later this term. They have had no training to do this important work.

Leaders do not understand well enough that the purpose of checking the work of teachers is to identify what training and support teachers require to improve their practice. Consequently, the procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching have been superficial and have resulted in little improvement.

The management of the performance of the very large number of teaching assistants is weak. Insufficient attention is paid to the impact of their work on the outcomes for pupils.

For example, 16 teaching assistants each work with one pupil. Leaders have not observed the work of these teaching assistants to identify where improvements could be made; nor have they checked the pupils' work to ensure that they are making better progress as a result of working with the teaching assistants.

Plans for school improvement and the Trust's statement of action are adequate as they cover all areas for improvement, with milestones and measures of success. However, the leadership team has not been able to demonstrate that it has the ability to take the necessary actions identified within the plans that would lead to school improvement.

The governing body has not challenged leaders with enough rigour on the improvements that should be made to teaching. However, the governing body is strengthening. A number of new governors add a greater breadth of experience. They are better informed about the work of the school, and following the review of governance, have an increased understanding of their role. The review of the management of the pupil premium has taken place and an action plan has been produced in response to this. Currently, it is not apparent whether this is having any impact.

External support

The executive headteacher and the Trust have not kept an effective check on the work of school leaders to make improvements. Consequently, the school does not demonstrate improvements at a rate that would enable special measures to be removed within the required timescale. The links with an outstanding local primary school are promising, but they have not resulted in school leaders and staff appreciating that they must have higher expectations of teaching and learning.