

PROTECT-INSPECTION



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17 March 2010

Mrs Jenny Fitzhugh
Headteacher
Haslington Primary School
Crewe Road
Haslington, Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 5SL

Dear Mrs Fitzhugh

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Haslington Primary School

Following my visit with Mrs Dee Brigstock, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10–11 March 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may 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 Governors and the Director of Children's Services for East Cheshire.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Haslington Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 10–11 March 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

Context

One full-time teacher has been appointed since the inspection of October 2009. A coordinator for Key Stage 1 is seconded from another school for the equivalent of two days per week. The secondment finishes at Easter, 2010.

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

Overall, pupils are making better progress in their learning, particularly in English and mathematics, which have been the focus of the school's efforts to date. Some pupils, for example in Year 1 and in the Year 3/4 classes, are making good progress, with many pupils on track to achieve challenging learning targets. In other years, for example, Years 5/6 and Year 2, fewer pupils are on track to reach the targets set for them. Slower progress is attributable to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, which all those connected with the school believe to be a legacy of the past disruption to pupils' education. This is particularly evident with the older pupils who have experienced disruption for the longest time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Such pupils are supported well by teaching assistants and the partnership with their parents and carers is positive and improving. Pupils receiving individual support to boost their attainment are also making good progress. Lesson observations support the picture of overall satisfactory progress, although better progress was seen in a number of lessons. Despite the many changes to staff since September this year, new teachers have gained the respect of pupils. Overall, pupils enjoy their lessons.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science and eliminate underachievement – satisfactory.

Other relevant outcomes for pupils

Outcomes for pupils, other than their academic attainment and progress, were not a focus for this first visit. However, inspectors noted generally good and caring behaviour by pupils, with only a trace of poorer attitudes to learning among older boys, a group singled out as one of the most underachieving in the last inspection.

The effectiveness of provision

The majority of the teaching observed was of satisfactory quality. Some good and better teaching was also seen. In line with the issues the school was left with by the last inspection, teachers have focused on improving their teaching of the basic skills, particularly those of literacy and numeracy. To this end, they have received much input on best practice from local authority consultants. They have also received substantial training on assessing how well pupils are doing and how to use this information to plan subsequent lessons to best effect. Teachers are now well skilled in the above aspects of modern teaching and assessment to promote learning. Pupils, and parents and carers, are increasingly aware of the levels at which pupils are working and what is required to move on to the next steps. However, time is required for these skills to embed and for them to be accurately applied to the learning needs of the particular pupils in each class. Furthermore, many teachers have creative ideas for making learning exciting, interesting and relevant for pupils that they are not currently bringing into play. This is because they are focused on applying the new techniques and on the basic skills. Overall, although the groundwork for improved teaching has been laid, the move from satisfactory to consistently good teaching awaits teachers integrating new skills with their existing strengths and tailoring them to meet pupils' learning needs.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good – satisfactory.
- Ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and how to reach their targets by improving the use of assessment in lesson planning and marking – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Parents' and carers' confidence in the new headteacher and in her senior management team, recorded in the last inspection, is proving well-founded. A recent questionnaire to parents and carers indicated that two thirds of them are entirely satisfied with the school, including with their children's progress. The other third of returns indicated that parents' and carers' most common concern was their children's progress and the impact of the school's past history. They are right to be concerned because for some pupils the legacy of past underachievement remains. However, in combination with a revitalised and highly knowledgeable governing body, and with the good support of the local authority, the headteacher and staff have made a strong start on improving the school. They have created the conditions within which teachers can eradicate the underachievement of the past.

The school's improvement plans are of good quality. Its performance is rigorously evaluated and teachers meet with the senior staff regularly to review the progress of each pupil. Leaders and governors have a realistic view of what has been achieved and of the magnitude of the work ahead. They have begun to empower teachers

and other staff to take on leadership roles, thus providing the school with greater strength and depth in leadership and management. This is at an early stage in development. However, the necessary groundwork to achieve this is in place. Though the confidence of staff remains fragile, their morale is improving. They work well as a team and they have confidence in the future. The corner has been turned.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Embed the recently introduced systems and strategies for improvement securely across the school, ensuring that their impact is closely monitored and evaluated – good.
- Strengthen the skills of middle leaders and managers - satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has provided good-quality external support for the school. The authority's initial strategic action plan for the school did not fully meet requirements. This was remedied and a new plan was in place by the time of this visit. This is providing the headteacher and governing body with a secure basis for the school's plans for improvement. The local authority has proved effective in providing challenge, advice and support for the school through the work of advisers and consultants. It is providing temporary funding to allow the school to close the attainment gap for pupils. The school has made good use of these additional resources and now requires time to embed new practice and tailor it to the specific needs of the school. The local authority has also brokered support for the governing body. This support is proving outstandingly successful. Governance is highly effective.

Priorities for further improvement

- Plan lessons more closely matched to the assessed learning needs of pupils.
- Improve the motivation and enjoyment of pupils by providing them with more imaginative and creative learning opportunities.