

Suite 22 West Lancs
Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: glaw@cfbt.com

24 June 2010

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

Dear Mrs Fitzhugh

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Haslington Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 and 23 June 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 second 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 – 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 governors and the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire East.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Haslington Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 June 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed teaching in all classes, talked to pupils as they worked in lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, governors, a group of staff with additional responsibilities, parents and a representative of the local authority.

Context

There have been several staff changes since the last monitoring visit in March 2010 and several more are due to take effect at the end of the summer term. The seconded Key Stage 1 coordinator has returned to his school and a new, permanent coordinator for Key Stage 1 has taken up her post. The acting deputy headteacher, who is part of the senior management team alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher, has secured promotion and will leave at the end of the school year. Several teachers are approaching the end of their temporary contracts with the school. There have been and are to be absences due to illness and for maternity leave. Despite the high level of staff movement, arrangements for staffing during the coming school year are secure.

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

Early indications following an analysis of pupils' performance in tests and assessments suggest that the decline in standards in 2009 has been arrested and that pupils are making up for lost ground. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) nearly all children are working within the range expected for children of this age. Those children who are working at levels below this have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities. The results of tests and assessments at Years 2 and 6 appear significantly better than in 2009. The results of the national tests at Year 6 are externally marked and are not yet available. However, all indications for the end of each key stage are that the percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected standards and the percentage of pupils attaining the highest levels for their age have improved. This is particularly significant for the pupils in Year 6, whose gaps in skills and knowledge were a cause for concern during the first monitoring visit. The school's tracking records for pupils in Year 5, another year group for which there was earlier concern, suggest these pupils are making good progress towards ambitious targets for 2011. Apart from the core subjects and skills, pupils are attaining notably high standards in sport and in the visual and creative arts.

Observations of pupils learning during the visit support the judgement that all pupils are making better progress than at the time of the first visit. Throughout the school pupils displayed a keenness to learn and an enjoyment of learning that was less evident in March. Particular attention has been given to pupils who had fallen behind with their work. Such pupils have made strong gains in knowledge, with clear improvements to their self-esteem and enthusiasm for schoolwork. The school provides for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are well integrated into the full spectrum of school life. They are settled and are making good progress.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

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

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Although there were no areas for improvement identified in outcomes for pupils other than the need to improve standards, the school and parents and carers have raised concerns about occasional lapses in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. These were noted at the time of the first visit. Since then, behaviour and attitudes have improved. At least part of the explanation for this improvement is the increased motivation and interest of pupils in their work and that they are more closely involved in assessing how well they are doing.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has improved significantly. All teaching observed during the visit was of at least good quality. The letter following the first monitoring visit suggested that teachers might make lessons more interesting and creative and to more closely match work to pupils' assessed needs. Both these suggestions have been implemented fully. Work of a highly imaginative nature is underway in all parts of the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 are working towards a performance of Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' at Manchester's Royal Exchange theatre, and Years 3 and 4 classes are preparing a film enterprise project based on India's 'Bollywood' for presentation to parents and carers. Such projects are challenging and engaging the interest of pupils. They are successfully involving different subjects of the curriculum in ways that make learning more purposeful and relevant.

Increasingly, and illustrated most effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' interests and enthusiasms are shaping the way in which projects develop. Pupils' work is now planned more thoroughly, based on a rigorous evaluation of previous learning. Work is provided for pupils with different levels of understanding, each working to measures of success tailored precisely for that group. Teachers take particular care to plan for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those whose progress is less than what was expected. Pupils are fully involved in assessing their learning from each lesson. The inspector had a slight

concern that the degree of detail provided within teachers' planning may prove unsustainable, and noted that the senior leadership team and governors, for example, wished to ensure staff well-being. Therefore, the school is encouraged to reduce the burden of lesson planning where possible to the minimum required by the teachers and managers to sustain the current improvements.

The school has improved the effectiveness of its care, guidance and support for pupils since the last inspection. Then, too much was newly introduced for inspectors to be confident about its effectiveness. This is no longer the case. Lost ground has been made up. There was evidence to indicate the school's provision for pupils' moral, social and spiritual development is now well established and benefiting all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who were fully included into all activities. This visit was made at a time when Year 6 pupils were preparing for transfer to secondary school and when older pupils were involved in Crewe's town sports. The school's arrangements for these events showed the high degree of care and encouragement the school and staff provides for pupils and illustrated the growing strength of the partnerships with other schools within the community.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The very promising start made by the new headteacher recorded in the inspection of October 2009 has been sustained. The evidence from this and the previous visit suggests that leadership and management at all levels have improved significantly, which is helping to build the school's capacity to be independent of the local authority. The senior leadership team of headteacher, deputy headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are proving very successful in addressing the key issues from the inspection and turning around the school's fortunes, especially in raising the achievement of pupils and their enjoyment of school. The morale of staff has improved. They are working extremely hard and successfully. Teachers, teaching assistants and administrative staff are training for and taking on new responsibilities. This is helping to ensure that leadership of subjects and aspects of the school's work are broadly based and that staff feel a strong sense of ownership for improvements. Parents interviewed during the visit were very positive about the effectiveness of the communication between parents and carers and the school, particularly about the school's use of text messages and emails to provide instant communication. They also recognised the approachability of senior staff and their willingness to listen to what parents and carers had to say. However, they acknowledged that a minority of parents and carers remained anxious about the school's ability to provide well for

their children, despite the best efforts of the school to reassure them. Working with the local authority, the school will explore further strategies to allay the remaining anxieties held by some parents and carers. The governors are better organised, prepared and trained for taking on their strategic role of oversight for the school; for example, in their ability to analyse the data about school performance.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

External support

The local authority has continued to provide good support to the school through support with finance, staffing, and advice for school leaders and governors. It is providing rigorous monitoring of progress. It recognises that some parents and carers remain anxious about the school and their children's progress. However, as the school becomes more self-sufficient and successful, it is allowing the school to play a greater role in determining the priorities for further support. This is proving an effective strategy in enabling the school to stand on its own feet after a period of intensive support.