

Nord Anglia Inspections
Anglia House
Carrs Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 2LA

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0161 491 4191
Direct F 0161 491 4409



9 December 2008

Mrs Susan Palmer
Acting Headteacher
Hylton Red House Primary School
Rotherham Road
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR5 5QL

Dear Mrs Palmer

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hylton Red House Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 and 5 December 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Sunderland.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick

Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Hylton Red House Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 4 - 5 December 2008

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, including lesson observations, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, literacy subject leader, chair of governors and the senior school improvement officer from the local authority (LA).

Context

The school has undergone significant staffing changes since it was inspected in June 2008. At that time a local headteacher was giving part time support and working with two recently appointed assistant headteachers to lead the school. At the end of the summer term, after the school had been placed in special measures, there were several resignations from promoted posts, including one of the assistant headteachers, and the literacy and science subject leaders. Since September 2008, an experienced headteacher has been appointed as full time acting headteacher and there have been changes to posts of responsibility. The remaining assistant headteacher has taken the role of acting deputy headteacher and coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo). New literacy and science subject leaders have been appointed from within the school. Since June 2008 there has been a number of staff absences, some of them long- term. The substantive headteacher has been absent since February 2008.

Achievement and standards

Standards are low in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Overall, children are not making enough progress from their starting points when they join the Reception class. Although at the last inspection in June children were judged to make good gains in their learning during the Reception year, this is not the case this term. Assessments of children's learning at the end of Reception are not accurate, because they are not based on rigorous or regular enough monitoring. Pupils now in Year 1 are well below average in their reading, writing and mathematical skills, with a good number who have still not reached the expected level for their age despite Foundation Stage records indicating that they have. Pupils in Year 1 have made inadequate progress this term especially in their mathematical skills; too many still do not have a secure knowledge of numbers or of how to add and subtract. In Year 2 progress is variable but there is more evidence of better progress for these pupils. Nevertheless, standards here remain low because of gaps in pupils' learning which are the product of weak teaching in the past. Results of teacher assessments in 2008 showed pupils reached below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

In Key Stage 2 there is a similar picture of low standards and underachievement. Results in the national tests in 2008 were well below average in English; in mathematics they were below average. Standards in English are improving across both key stages with the introduction of a school wide programme for teaching writing. This has improved pupils' understanding of how to write for different purposes and has impacted on the length and structure of their written work. However, most work is still marred by poor spelling and punctuation, and for too many pupils very poor writing and presentation of work reduces standards even further. Standards in English are still exceptionally low by Year 6; in mathematics they are below average.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and join in lessons with enthusiasm where tasks are pitched at the right level. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school; but some pupils require close supervision to help them maintain good standards of behaviour in larger settings. This is especially noticeable in assemblies when they are often only supervised by one or two staff. This leads to fussy behaviour and lack of attention, spoils the otherwise good atmosphere of assemblies and creates the potential for continued disruption in the classroom.

Quality of provision

The acting headteacher, working closely with the LA has carried out a detailed audit of teaching and learning this term. Individual strengths and weaknesses have been identified and all staff have been given specific targets and support to improve their performance. While school records indicate that there is some improvement it is too early for this to have embedded and staff continue to work at improving their skills. Currently, the quality of teaching and learning varies from good to inadequate. Overall, teachers do not yet have an accurate enough picture of pupils' learning to plan effectively to meet the needs of all pupils in their classes. This is true of both key stages, the Foundation Stage and the language resource unit. The organisation of year groups into ability sets for English and mathematics has led teachers too often to assume that they are teaching to a narrow band of ability in their classes. This is by no means the case. Consequently the pitch of learning is often inappropriate for pupils who find tasks either too difficult or not challenging enough. Despite training and support this term to improve assessment practices and hard work by staff to master new systems, there is not enough impact yet to significantly improve the progress that pupils make. Teachers' expectations of pupils remain too low overall. Time is not well used in some classes, especially in the Foundation Stage and Year 1, so that the focus of learning is sometimes lost because there is a lack of drive to begin promptly and complete tasks in a given time. Subject expertise is not consistently strong so that all teachers do not have a clear idea of progression in pupils' learning. This is clear from planning which does not clearly identify learning outcomes for different ability groups or allocate resources that will capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. In some lessons teachers talk for too long which makes

pupils passive and then restless. Teachers do not all recognise that the good will of pupils and their positive attitudes are at risk of being lost in such situations and that more active learning is needed to allow pupils to make better progress. Where pupils are fully involved and active throughout the lesson, through such strategies as talk partners, frequent challenge activities, answering questions and explaining their thinking, they develop confidence and independence and learn at a good rate. Long term planning for the curriculum has improved this term, to eliminate repetition of topics and ensure that pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement. The development of the curriculum to meet the differing needs of pupils and provide opportunities for them to develop their special talents and interests, though improving with new initiatives such as the writing project, is moving too slowly to have a significant impact on pupils' rate of learning.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improving the overall quality of the teaching so that it accelerates learning – inadequate
- Increasing the accuracy of assessment –inadequate
- Adapting the curriculum so that it better meets the learning needs of the pupils – inadequate

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has moved quickly to establish effective protocols and clear expectations of staff performance. There has been a radical review and overhaul of staff roles and responsibilities. The new management structure now provides clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Promoted post holders now have detailed job descriptions, which include their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Performance management targets are now in place for all staff and are closely linked to raising standards and improving pupils' achievement. The improvement plan clearly indicates outcomes and success criteria, timescales and personnel with accountability for specific initiatives. The work of the school is now very much focused on the key priorities of raising standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning. Regular monitoring by senior staff and subject leaders is producing a detailed picture of where the school needs to give additional training and support. It has been well supported in this by local authority consultants who have worked with individual staff throughout the term. The acting deputy headteacher is giving a firm steer to developing the accuracy and use of assessment. There is a growing focus on analysing teacher assessments and following this through with work scrutiny to check the accuracy of teachers' assessment and identify which staff need further support. School monitoring records indicate that there have been some improvements, notably to the regularity of assessment of pupils' learning and to the quality of teaching in some classes. However, there is still a considerable way to go before the high proportion of inadequate learning is eradicated. The inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' planning need careful analysis to determine which groups are not being adequately taught over the longer term. New structures and developing expertise in senior staff and subject leaders are improving the school's capacity to identify accurately what it needs to do next.

While much of this work needs time to embed before it has an impact, changes to management structures and expectations of staff are effective in determining the direction and accelerating the pace of improvement. Since taking up post in September the acting headteacher has taken action to improve the safety and security of the school site. This has improved vehicle access and ensured that movement of pupils around the site is safe during the school day. Other aspects of safeguarding meet current requirements, including those for child protection and risk assessment.

Governors have established a monitoring committee to evaluate the school's progress on the main issues raised at the inspection. So far they have relied on headteacher and local authority reports about the school's progress. The governors' post-Ofsted committee has not established a clear timetable of focused visits, with agreed protocols in order to give the school objective and effective support to improve. The exception to this is the chair of governors who makes frequent visits to the school and makes informal, unfocused visits to classrooms. While this is well intentioned it adds little to self-evaluation procedures and does not help the school move forward.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Increasing the effectiveness of leadership and management, including developing the monitoring and evaluation skills of leaders and managers – satisfactory

External support

The LA has given considerable and effective support to the school following the absence of the substantive headteacher since February 2008. It provided, first a part time acting headteacher till the end of the summer term, and then a full time acting headteacher from September 2008. When the school was placed in special measures, the authority produced a detailed and comprehensive plan for improvement. In September, the LA conducted a detailed and rigorous audit of teaching and learning, including the accuracy and effectiveness of teachers' assessment. This gave the acting headteacher an accurate base from which to lead improvement. Individual strengths and weaknesses were identified and appropriate support and training have been put in place for all staff. A new school improvement officer was assigned to the school in September, who has worked closely with the senior school improvement officer to provide good levels of challenge and support for the acting headteacher. These actions by the LA have succeeded in stabilising, and significantly improving the leadership and management of the school. They have also provided the school with much needed expertise to help it tackle serious weaknesses and inadequacies.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve teachers' planning, ensuring it provides good levels of challenge for all pupils, based on thorough evaluation of previous learning
- Monitor and improve provision in the Foundation Stage to ensure that all areas of learning are adequately planned and resourced and establish the use of key workers to lead and assess children's learning
- Involve the governors in planned monitoring of the school's improvement