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5 November 2010

Mr David Saunders
Headteacher
Broom Valley Community School
Broom Valley Road
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S60 2QU

Dear Mr Saunders

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Broom Valley Community Primary School

Following my visit with Andrew Swallow, additional inspector, to your school on 3 and 4 November 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2009. 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 and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – **satisfactory**

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – **satisfactory**

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 the Governing Body and the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2009

- Raise attainment and improve pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that the work set provides greater challenge to pupils, particularly the more-able children
 - ensuring that lessons proceed at a pace that fully engages all pupils
 - assessing pupils' work more accurately in order to match future teaching more closely to pupils' needs
 - tracking pupils' progress more accurately throughout school so that targets set are both challenging and achievable.

- Strengthening the effectiveness of leadership and management in driving school improvement by:
 - an improved process of self-evaluation which provides a more accurate assessment of the quality of the school's outcomes and provision
 - more rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching
 - closer scrutiny by the governing body of the school's performance and provision so that it can ensure weaknesses are addressed.

Special measures: monitoring of Broom Valley Community School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 November 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner and two representatives from the local authority.

Context

Since the first monitoring visit, two deputy headteachers and four middle leaders have been appointed. The governing body has recruited a new vice-chair and strengthened its membership.

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

Unvalidated published data show that standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen since the 2009 inspection. There was a notable improvement in writing standards, reflecting teachers' hard work on this area during the past year. More-able pupils have improved their performance in all subjects. The rise in standards was helped by teachers' more effective use of assessment information to provide a 'boost' for underachieving pupils. Senior leaders are rightly setting targets for further increases in standards to take account of the improvements they are bringing about in teaching.

Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and school records show that pupils are making better progress than they were at the time of the previous monitoring inspection. The improvement is particularly evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and the upper part of Key Stage 2, which are the phases where teaching has improved most in recent months. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are improving their progress because they are given more opportunity to learn literacy and numeracy skills through familiar everyday activities such as shopping and cooking. Pupils with special educational needs are making better progress because teaching assistants are more skilled in challenging them to learn independently. New teaching approaches are helping pupils identified as gifted and talented to accelerate their progress.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise attainment and improve pupils' achievement – **satisfactory**

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils, who start mid-year, often with limited English, settle in quickly, enjoy learning and participate fruitfully in all aspects of school life. This is because of the well-planned induction for them and the timely provision of appropriate support. A significant feature of the induction is the role played enthusiastically by pupils in helping newcomers to make friends and learn how to manage in an unfamiliar environment. Pupils with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities gain much from being in the school and, again, the support from other pupils is an important contributory factor. These examples of pupils' care for others typify the welcoming and harmonious community that the school has created for families from a wide range of backgrounds.

Pupils' sensible behaviour and eagerness to learn make a significant contribution to their improving progress. In most classes they work very well independently and learn much by cooperating with their classmates. Attendance is maintained at a level broadly in line with the national average, which is the result of considerable hard work and effective communication with pupils and their families.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching and use of assessment have improved since the previous monitoring visit, except in lower Key Stage 2 where there is still much inadequate teaching. Where teaching is more effective, recently appointed teachers and constructive guidance from the new senior leadership team have contributed significantly.

The pace of learning has improved in lessons which have a sharp focus and a good balance between teachers' explanations and pupils' independent work. The contribution of teaching assistants has improved considerably and many now collaborate well with teachers in ensuring that all groups of pupils make progress. In lessons where pupils make little progress, it is because too much time is spent on asking unchallenging questions or pupils are trying to deal with too many new ideas at once and they become confused.

Teachers have improved the way they plan lessons to meet the needs of all groups of pupils. However, the pitch of work is still not appropriate for some groups because the emphasis is more on varying how much of a task is completed than on adapting the learning method or level of challenge. In the most effective lessons, teachers recognise when tasks are not sufficiently demanding and they 'think on their feet' to increase the challenge straight away. In question and answer sessions, only a minority of teachers engage all pupils by skilfully targeting questions towards particular individuals or groups and varying the level of challenge appropriately.

Teachers have simplified their approach to providing targets and this has helped pupils to be much clearer about how they can make progress towards higher levels of attainment. Teachers' marking also provides better guidance to pupils on how

they can improve their work. Senior leaders have introduced systems to give teachers clearer information on which pupils are underachieving and how to enable them to catch up. While developing well, these systems are not yet fully established.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving. Staff work very well together to provide a rich environment in which children are making much faster progress in their learning and development, especially in language, numeracy, playing with others and being independent. A notable strength is the contribution of bilingual support staff to the progress of children from minority ethnic backgrounds who speak only their home language. Not only does this support help the children to communicate in English, but it also enables them to make as much progress as all children in other areas of the curriculum.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improving pace in lessons and the use of assessment information to support pupils' learning – **satisfactory**

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the previous monitoring inspection the school's capacity to raise standards has started to increase with the appointment of new leaders. The deputy headteachers give the headteacher effective support in evaluating teaching and assessment across the school and introducing improvements where required. They have not yet had sufficient time to remove all inadequate teaching. They are well supported by the new middle leaders who are providing more effective teaching and preparing plans for how they will improve the quality of provision across the school. Working parties introduced last year to improve aspects of teaching are now making a positive difference, for example, one working party has promoted more creative methods for improving writing and this has contributed to the rising standards in English.

The leadership team continues to use the very systematic approach to evaluating and improving teaching that was seen during the first monitoring inspection. This is enabling leaders to collate detailed and accurate information about strengths and weaknesses, which they use to provide clear guidance to individual teachers. Guidance is backed up by more assertive action to improve practice where this is required. As a result, all teachers are trying hard to work more effectively, but with varying degrees of success.

Senior leaders have improved their use of information on pupils' progress to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. They are also increasingly using this information to hold each teacher to account for the progress of all groups of pupils in their class and to help them plan how to tackle any underachievement. The impact of this work is reduced because the analysis of pupils' progress is not sufficiently detailed; however, senior leaders have started to tackle this matter effectively.

The governing body is taking effective action to increase its contribution to improving the school and is showing a determination to remove special measures as quickly as possible. As a result of a training programme for all governors and the appointment of a new vice chair, it is no longer left to just the chair to evaluate the work of the school and hold leaders to account. The governing body has introduced methods for receiving better information about the school's progress, for example, by allocating members to monitor new approaches. A committee structure has been established to provide more detailed scrutiny of the school's work, but this is at an early stage of development.

The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improving monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision, particularly the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes – **satisfactory**
- Closer scrutiny by the governing body of the school's performance – **satisfactory**

External support

Local authority officers and the School Improvement Partner monitor the school's progress thoroughly and have an accurate understanding of priorities for improvement. They collaborate well in providing useful guidance to leaders and teachers. They correctly judge that the school's leadership team is beginning to demonstrate a better capacity to raise standards and they are reducing the intensity of their support accordingly.