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19 November 2010

Mrs Karen Smith
Headteacher
Meadow View Primary School
Meadowhall Road
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Rotherham
S61 2JD

Dear Mrs Smith

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Meadow View Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 and 18 November, 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 February 2010. 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 – 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 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 February 2010

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - strengthening the quality and consistency of teaching to ensure there is sufficient pace and challenge for all pupils
 - developing assessment procedures and practices, including marking and the setting of personal targets
 - making use of the information about pupils' performance to drive and secure improvement
 - ensuring the curriculum engages pupils and motivates them to learn.

- Implement effective strategies to reduce absence and improve attendance.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the school to account through challenge, support and setting a clear direction for its work
 - ensuring monitoring focuses sharply on pupils' learning, and that findings are translated into actions to bring about rapid improvement
 - establishing rigorous evaluation procedures in all areas of the school's work to help leaders ensure that identified priorities are achieved as quickly as possible.

- Develop strategies for promoting community cohesion and evaluate their impact on pupils' understanding of the cultures both in school and the wider world.

Special measures: monitoring of Meadow View Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 November 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised management documents and analysed pupils' work. He met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and the School Improvement Partner.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, new staff have been appointed. All teaching posts are now filled and the leadership team is at full strength.

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

Unvalidated data for July 2010 show that standards of attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are similar to those in 2009. This represents a rapid improvement in the progress of the Year 6 pupils during their last two terms, following previous significant disruption to their teaching. Lesson observations, pupils' work and school records show that dips in pupils' progress across the school have largely been removed and, therefore, pupils' progress overall is beginning to improve. This is a recent development and due to more stable and effective teaching since September. School leaders, in partnership with the local authority, are allocating considerable additional support to classes where pupils' progress has been very slow in the past, and these pupils are now catching up.

There is an improvement in the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. This is because additional support more closely meets their needs as a result of better planning and more effective guidance from teachers and teaching assistants. The progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving rapidly as a result of better provision. Lesson observations show particular improvement in speaking skills, using letters and sounds, learning to play together and scientific ideas, such as what happens when ice melts.

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

- increase the rate of pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils say that they enjoy school more than they did at the time of the February inspection because learning is more interesting and they feel much more appreciated by the headteacher and staff. This is contributing to an improvement in attendance, as is the hard work of staff to ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the importance of not missing school. Pupils' behaviour is also improving and their increasingly positive attitudes to work contribute to their better progress. For example, more lessons are marked by a positive climate for learning in which pupils are discussing issues, helping each other, taking responsibility for assessing their own work and deciding their own next steps in learning.

Pupils are improving their skills in making a positive contribution to life in school and the wider community. This is because many pupils are being given more responsibilities, for example, as school councillors and house captains. They also exercise responsibility in projects to help local senior citizens and in projects related to improving the conditions of low paid workers abroad. Pupils are beginning to increase their experience and understanding of other cultures within and beyond their own area. This is an outcome of recent work to develop community cohesion involving, for example, partnership work with a nearby school and learning about life in other countries during lessons and assemblies.

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

- implement effective strategies to reduce absence – satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching, overall, is improving quickly because it is more consistently effective across the school. An increasingly systematic approach to teaching phonic skills and reading comprehension in each class is helping pupils to achieve more in English and in other subjects. The planning of lessons is much more effective because detailed consideration is given to how the learning methods, support and resources can be adapted to help all groups of pupils to meet challenging objectives. The pace of learning is better because lessons have a sharp focus; teachers do not spend too long on explanations and there is plenty of time to practise new skills in interesting activities. Pupils are improving the way they use their targets as guidance in their work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are much more included in lessons alongside the rest of their class. They are helped to make the same rate of progress as other pupils with well planned support from teachers and teaching assistants. In a small minority of classes, teaching is slower in improving because

lesson introductions do not always hold the attention of all pupils and teachers do not check pupils' progress during group work to maintain appropriate challenge.

The curriculum has improved considerably since the inspection because subjects are now combined within interesting and imaginative topics, such as Fairtrade, Enterprise, Magic and Disney. Work includes much first-hand experience, including educational visits, which provides an exciting stimulus for learning. A developing strength is teachers' use of topics to provide pupils with real-life purposes for extending their reading, writing and mathematics skills. Many pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Residential visits with a focus on self-sufficiency and teamwork make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The curriculum is increasingly enhanced by partnerships with local organisations, for example, members of the Rotherham Rugby Club help pupils with reading skills and learning about other countries.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching and the use of assessment – good
- ensure the curriculum engages pupils and motivates them to learn – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management have improved significantly since the last inspection. The new headteacher, with increasingly effective support from senior and middle leaders, communicates high aspirations for the school while providing a clear direction. There is a strong, shared determination amongst staff to remove the causes for concern and morale is high. Senior and middle leaders are much more involved in evaluating teaching and pupils' achievement across the school and they provide helpful guidance where required. Their work has led to recent improvements in lesson planning and to the teaching of reading and phonics. The positive impact of these measures on pupils' progress is beginning to be seen, therefore, leaders are demonstrating an improving capacity to raise standards of attainment in the future.

The leadership team is making much better use of the information they collect about pupils' progress. In particular, they ensure that all teachers are aware of the pupils that need extra support to help them reach their expected levels of attainment. They also use the information more effectively to set appropriately challenging targets for raising standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. Their plans for achieving these targets are focused and manageable.

The school's partnership with parents and carers is improving and school leaders are doing much to encourage this. Many parents and carers now value the opportunity to take part in activities alongside their children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and similar involvement is steadily increasing in other parts of the school.

The contribution of the governing body to the school's improvement has improved significantly since the first monitoring inspection. New members have been recruited, including some with considerable experience of governance. As a result, the governing body is much more business-like in its approach. Members of the governing body have developed a range of effective methods for gathering information about the school's work and many of them are receiving training in how to evaluate it. They now work alongside the local authority in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to remove the school's cause for concern. Members of the governing body, therefore, have a clear and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and remaining weaknesses. On the basis of this, governors are much more effective in holding the school to account. They also provide the school with very useful support in such areas as making links with community organisations and achieving best value when buying equipment.

School leaders have completed a rigorous audit of strengths and areas for improvement contributing to community cohesion. They have already taken action to increase cohesiveness within the school community by, for example, ensuring that signs and displays are welcoming to the growing number of pupils from Eastern European countries. They are now beginning to introduce a number of approaches to reach out to local and wider communities, including participation in a Linking Schools network and a Global Dimensions project. This work is starting to raise pupils' awareness of the lives of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and how they can live harmoniously together.

The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

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

- ensure monitoring and evaluation is rigorous, sharply focused on pupils' learning and helps to bring about rapid improvement – good
- ensure the governing body holds the school to account through challenge, support and setting a clear direction – good
- develop strategies for promoting community cohesion and evaluate their impact on pupils' understanding of the cultures both in school and the wider world – satisfactory

External support

The local authority and the School Improvement Partner, in partnership with school leaders and members of the governing body closely monitor the progress of the school. They provide very helpful guidance and training, especially for teachers and leaders who are new to their roles. The local authority recognises the growing capacity of the school to bring about improvement on its own. Therefore, their support is now focused only on areas of significant need, for example, where pupils' achievement has fallen a long way behind because of weak and disrupted teaching in the past.