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10 November 2010

Ms P Barnes
Headteacher
Newport School
Newport Road
London
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Dear Ms Barnes

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Newport School

Following my visit with Velia Hartland, Additional Inspector, to your school on 3–4 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 December 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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.

One Newly Qualified Teacher may be appointed for the spring term and one for the summer term.

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 interim executive board and the Director of Children's Services for Waltham Forest.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science by:
 - improving teachers' understanding of age-related learning expectations so that lesson planning is closely matched to the needs of all pupils and their progress is accelerated.

- Ensure that pupils, especially the more able, clearly understand targets which offer greater challenge, and which lead to higher attainment.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that all teachers securely understand and apply those components of good teaching that are based on sound assessment
 - developing teachers' understanding of how to use assessment information to accurately track pupils' progress so that lesson planning builds effectively on prior learning.

- Improve teachers' marking and next step guidance by:
 - developing more consistent strategies in marking pupils' work so that pupils know how to move their learning forward with greater confidence and independence
 - sharing existing good practice and using rigorous monitoring to identify and eradicate ineffective practice.

Special measures: monitoring of Newport School

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

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, a group of parents and carers, teachers and non-teaching staff, the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, the vice-chair of the interim executive board and a local authority adviser.

Context

Since the first monitoring inspection, the interim headteacher has been appointed as the substantive headteacher and a group of eight middle leaders have been appointed, each with responsibility for a year group. Six new class teachers were appointed for the beginning of this term. Classes for children in the Reception Year and facilities for the outreach services of the Children's Centre have been relocated within the existing accommodation. Alongside this, play areas for the whole school have been reorganised and upgraded, and some internal rooms reassigned and redecorated. An interim executive board continues to take the role of school governance and the school continues to be linked with a Local Leader of Education and her school in Muswell Hill as part of the national City Challenge initiative.

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

Unvalidated results from the 2010 national tests and assessments for pupils in Years 2 and 6 confirm the school's own assessments. Although attainment remains low, particularly in writing, mathematics and science for pupils by the end of Year 6, standards are improving, as is the amount of progress that pupils make. This is true also for pupils across the school for the past academic year, as evidenced through the detailed analysis carried out by the deputy headteacher responsible for looking at performance and standards. This means that the gap between the school's results and those seen nationally is reducing, with achievements getting closer to national averages and expectations. The range of support put in place for the Year 6 pupils was particularly successful in enabling them to catch up for lost learning last year.

The school now has a robust set of assessments and analysis for the past academic year for reading, writing, mathematics and science across all year groups. The senior leadership team have used this information well with teachers to set suitably challenging targets and expectations for pupils in their classes for the year. Teachers know what is expected of them and they are using this information to plan appropriately challenging work. They feel that they get good support from regular monitoring by senior and middle leaders, including pupil progress meetings where they are held to account for what pupils are learning in the classroom.

Senior leaders continue to tease out differences in performance for different groups and the way that pupils are identified for additional support is well founded in data. Regular assessment of their progress leads to a flexible approach so that support is provided for those who need it most at any one time. The more able pupils are included in this additional support, and activities such as the discovery group and the headteacher's reading group are working well to raise their self-esteem, their achievements and their profile in the school. A range of support is in place for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the tracking for each individual's attainments is well established. The data do not yet show how well these pupils are doing across the school and this now needs to be pulled together to identify the strengths and potential weaknesses in the provision.

Although there is still some work to be done to develop pupils' use of their individual targets to assess how well they are doing, this has improved considerably since the last visit. All pupils in Years 2 to 6 have targets in their books for English, mathematics and science. Younger pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, also have targets in suitable forms. In all cases, the targets are phrased in ways that are easily understood by the pupils; they know them well and teachers encourage pupils to use them.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science by:
 - improving teachers' understanding of age-related learning expectations so that lesson planning is closely matched to the needs of all pupils and their progress is accelerated – satisfactory.
- Ensure that pupils, especially the more able, clearly understand targets which offer greater challenge, and which lead to higher attainment – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils continue to take their learning very seriously. Their attendance is low in relation to national averages but in response to the school's work with families and a very clear policy on absence, the attendance for some has improved and the proportion of those who are persistently absent has reduced.

The effectiveness of provision

Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work during this inspection confirm the views of the school, local authority and City Challenge that teaching and learning in lessons is generally satisfactory and approximately half of the teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last visit. Reasons for this include teachers taking more ownership of the part that they play in raising attainment, the use of assessment to

match activities more closely to pupils' abilities and the work of middle leaders to challenge the suitability of the work that pupils get in class. As a result, the more able pupils in particular are getting a better deal in lessons because they are challenged more. There is less challenge in the activities planned for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which means that they do not always make as much progress as others towards their goals. Similarly, the pace of work in some lessons inhibits the degree of challenge for all pupils, not least because they may not have enough time to finish the tasks to a sufficiently high standard.

There is now a much more consistent and conscientious approach to marking pupils' work. This goes hand-in-hand with a greater focus on targets, teachers' improved knowledge and use of assessment, and higher expectations of pupils to take account of teachers' comments. This is also leading to improved presentation of work in books. By highlighting work and referencing comments to the learning intentions, pupils can see easily how well their teacher thinks they are doing. There are good examples of where teachers provide pupils with next steps for improvement or pose follow-up questions but the practice is patchy, meaning that some get better advice than others. Displays in most classrooms provide pupils with examples and clues as to how to improve their work, such as vocabulary lists and annotated examples of their work. This is better in some classrooms than others. In addition, teaching resources do not reflect the rich cultural diversity of the pupils and their families.

A revised curriculum for science was introduced at the beginning of term, with blocks of work for half of each term. It is too early yet to see the extent to which this will improve pupils' achievements but the changes are well founded on identified weaknesses. So, for example, the new curriculum places higher priority on understanding scientific vocabulary and provides opportunities for greater progression of knowledge and skills.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that all teachers securely understand and apply those components of good teaching that are based on sound assessment
 - developing teachers' understanding of how to use assessment information to accurately track pupils' progress so that lesson planning builds effectively on prior learning – good.

- Improve teachers' marking and next step guidance by:
 - developing more consistent strategies in marking pupils' work so that pupils know how to move their learning forward with greater confidence and independence
 - sharing existing good practice and using rigorous monitoring to identify and eradicate ineffective practice – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The continued focus on good-quality and well-targeted professional development is a strength of the leadership and management of the school because it allows for accountability within a supportive framework. This approach to improving teachers' performance is now bearing fruit and has been extended to a new group of staff this term – the middle leaders. Their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and they have a training programme in place to develop their skills as individual leaders and as part of the leadership team. As a result, whereas on the last visit the senior leaders were driving and monitoring school improvement, on this visit it is clear that these responsibilities are beginning to be much more widely shared. The new middle leaders and class teachers alike are rising to the senior team's expectations of them. Teaching and non-teaching staff, those who have additional responsibilities as well as those who do not, are not only working very hard but now see for themselves that it is they who are making the difference to improved pupils' outcomes. In this way, senior staff are successfully increasing the school's capacity for improvement.

At the time of the last visit the single central record of checks on staff did not meet the current requirements. This has been sorted out and the requirements are met. A revised policy for child protection is being presented for approval to the interim executive board at their next meeting.

External support

The local authority's approach to support continues to complement that of the senior staff, enabling the school to retain ownership of school improvement. The school drives the support and the local authority provides it as appropriate and together they monitor what is needed and what is working well. Support for improving pupils' achievements in science is now in place and consultants for literacy and numeracy continue to work alongside school staff, as do colleagues from the link school. In addition, both the local authority and City Challenge have carried out separate formal reviews of the school's work since the last visit. Plans for a new governing body to shadow the interim executive board are proposed for January 2011 with a view to them taking responsibility for governance from the following September.

Priorities for further improvement

There are no additional priorities for the school to consider at this time.