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22 November 2010

Mr S P Bowler
Executive Headteacher
Huthwaite All Saint's CofE (Aided) Infant School
Common Road
Huthwaite
Sutton-in-Ashfield
NG17 2JR

Dear Mr Bowler

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Huthwaite All Saint's CofE (Aided) Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.

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, the Diocesan Board of Education for the Diocese of Southwell and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Huthwaite All Saint's CofE (Aided) Infant School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on Thursday 18 November 2010

Evidence

The monitoring inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' English and mathematics workbooks. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, teachers, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and the school improvement partner.

Context

Following the monitoring inspection in July 2010 the governing body entered into collaboration with the John Davies Primary School, Huthwaite. In October 2010, the headteacher of John Davies Primary School became the executive headteacher of both schools and a head of school for All Saint's was appointed at the same time. In September 2010 a temporary teacher was employed to teach the Year 2 class. A permanent teacher for Year 2 takes up post in January 2011. Other appointments include a part-time teacher who spends some time coordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

By the end of the school year in 2010, standards in Key Stage 1 were broadly average with marked improvement in writing and mathematics. Currently, judging from the slow progress most pupils make in lessons and as seen in their books, broadly average standards of work are not being sustained. Pupils' books show better progress in English than in mathematics which is the result of literacy provision having had priority. The planning of themes, such as 'Owl Babies' in Year 1, stimulates pupils' interest and enjoyment. Teaching has often been systematic as a result of detailed literacy planning to help pupils produce well-written stories. This is not the case in mathematics where the range and amount of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 is limited and lacks challenge.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Attendance is average and pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and, as shown by positive attitudes to learning, are amenable to working hard and making progress. In discussion, a few pupils thought some of their work was too easy.

The effectiveness of provision

Too high a proportion of teaching seen in Years 1 and 2 is inadequate despite the substantial professional development on offer. Teachers are not a permanent and cohesive group. The benefits of the support available are not always translated into effective classroom practice.

In inadequate lessons, learning objectives were set but often not communicated well to pupils, who did not see the point of their work. Expectations are too low and numeracy work in particular lacks challenge. In the few lessons seen that were satisfactory or better, effective use of available assessment information ensured that pupils' capabilities were understood, especially in literacy. Literacy work with small groups of pupils, managed by teaching assistants outside the classroom, is good because it uses assessment and approaches to literacy well to support both more able and less able pupils in extending their skills.

Pupils' work is marked regularly with positive and helpful comments. Where improvements are required, these are not always followed up by teachers and comments are not linked to pupils' targets or assessment.

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

- raise the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and accelerate pupils' progress by raising teachers' expectations of pupils' learning – inadequate progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new leadership is very recently in place and has had little time to have impact. Leaders have built upon the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work established in the months after the last inspection and this is now rigorous. The executive headteacher and head of school add their own good experience and expertise to this to the extent that they have a clear grasp of strengths and weaknesses and priorities for improvement. This is reflected in detailed plans for improvement even though limited headway has been made. Leadership has not had sufficient time to ensure effective teaching and learning across the school.

The tracking of pupils' progress has very recently been brought into line with systems at John Davies Primary School. At present, tracking is providing very little data on progress and is barely influencing lesson planning and pupils' targets. The arrival of a special educational needs coordinator means that provision to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is beginning to be organised systematically. Governors, several of whom are closely involved and supportive, are now almost at full complement as a governing body but still have work to do to fully effect their role with the school.

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

- improve the systems for tracking pupils' progress so that any underachievement is identified quickly and the school intervenes and the school intervenes promptly to boost progress – inadequate progress
- improve the systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and all of the school's work – satisfactory progress.

External support

The local authority's action plan meets requirements. External support is substantial, although its impact on the pace of improvement has been limited. Links with primary schools have brought opportunities for teachers to see good practice and receive coaching. Two advanced skills teachers visit regularly to support literacy and numeracy teaching. Staffing remains in flux and embedding the knowledge and skills, which are being developed through the external support for teaching and learning, is still required.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure immediate and effective steps are taken to eliminate the inadequate teaching, learning and use of assessment so that pupils across Years 1 and 2 are always challenged by their work and make progress.

Annex

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and accelerate pupils' progress by raising teachers' expectations of pupils' learning and ensuring that:
 - assessment information is used consistently in all planning to match pupils' work to their different abilities
 - the teaching of writing gives more emphasis to ensuring pupils write equally well at all times
 - the teaching of mathematics gives pupils more opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve real life problems
 - teachers' marking helps pupils understand what they have to do to improve their work
 - writing and mathematical skills are promoted wherever possible in all subjects.

- Improve the systems for tracking pupils' progress so that any underachievement is identified quickly and the school intervenes promptly to boost progress.

- Improve the systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and all of the school's work by:
 - clearly identifying areas for improvement in teaching and learning and following them up to ensure teachers are doing what is asked of them
 - taking steps to ensure pupils' learning is continuous no matter who is teaching them
 - helping all staff and governors to understand their part in helping to improve pupils' performance and progress
 - increasing the challenge in the targets set for improvement in order to accelerate pupils' learning and progress.