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10 November 2010

Miss Nicki Ellwand
Acting Headteacher
Pontefract the Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School
Carleton Road
Carleton
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
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Dear Miss Ellwand

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Pontefract the Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 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 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 – **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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

Liz Godman
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise achievement and standards in all subjects by:
 - ensuring all lessons lead to good or better progress for all pupils
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning in lessons
 - making lessons more challenging, particularly for pupils of middle and high ability
 - improving the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to develop their literacy skills, including speaking and listening, across all subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment by:
 - ensuring lessons are engaging and well matched to the needs of all pupils
 - identifying more opportunities to assess pupils in lessons
 - sharpening the quality of advice and guidance given to pupils so they are left in no doubt how they should improve their work
 - improving the accuracy, consistency and quality of marking across the school.
- Ensure leaders and managers drive improvements by:
 - ensuring monitoring and evaluation systems are accurate in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - ensuring that the school development plans are precise in addressing improvements
 - establishing consistency of practice across all classrooms, so that good and outstanding practice is shared
 - enabling staff to understand assessment data and use it effectively in the classroom to plan work which challenges all pupils
 - giving governors more accurate information about the school so that they are in a better position to hold it to account for its effectiveness.

Special measures: monitoring of Pontefract the Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 November 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and talked with pupils, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher from the National Support School, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and a representative of the local authority.

Context

The headteacher has been absent since shortly after the last monitoring inspection and the deputy headteacher has left the school. A new deputy headteacher, who is currently the acting headteacher, has been in post since September 2010. New teachers have joined the staff in Years 1 and 3. The Year 1 teacher is seconded from the National Support School, which also continues to provide the executive headteacher and her leadership team in support of the school. The Year 4 teacher is currently on long-term absence and her post is covered by a temporary teacher. The interim executive board has now been in place for several months. The premises have been developed, especially to improve the accommodation for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

The rate at which pupils make progress is more consistent because there is a better match of activities to their needs in lessons. Pupils' progress is starting to accelerate steadily, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1. The better progress noted at the last monitoring inspection is also being maintained in Years 5 and 6. Pupils relish the greater opportunities to work independently and collaboratively. However, for some, the effectiveness of this is variable because they are not yet all used to working in this way. There are exceptions, including the pupils in Year 4 who were sensible and aware of others' needs during an art lesson. Pupils are increasingly able to make links with other learning when given the opportunity. Pupils in Year 1 were able to apply their knowledge of numbers to solve simple 'party problems' at the end of a mathematics lesson. Those in Year 5 worked independently to complete a comprehension task, while the adults worked with other small groups. At the end of the lesson the pupils used their reading skills to answer questions about Greek myths.

The progress of pupils of all abilities is improving. In the better lessons, higher-attaining pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenges that are set for them. In these lessons they are able to explain how they will tackle a problem and offer their ideas with imagination and clarity. In some lessons, pupils are also starting to

evaluate how well they have done, but generally opportunities for them to do this are missed.

Pupils' work in the different subjects of the curriculum indicates that they are starting to make greater use of their literacy skills in history and science, for example. However, reading skills are developing more rapidly than writing as pupils are increasingly able to retrieve information and to make inferences. Work undertaken in literacy lessons shows that pupils are better able to write at length and to use punctuation and different forms of writing to stronger effect. Writing in different subjects indicates that pupils do not always apply these skills. The presentation, handwriting and spelling of many pupils remain weak, although adjustments to the timetable are starting to provide time to redress this. Attainment, and particularly the proportion of pupils working at the higher levels, remain low, but the rate at which pupils make progress in their learning is increasing, so achievement is gradually starting to rise.

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

- Raise achievement and standards in all subjects – **satisfactory**

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils continue to be polite and careful when moving around the school and at break times and lunchtimes. There are occasions in some lessons, though, when acceptable behaviour is less evident. This is because concentration and interest wane or because pupils are not yet able to work independently or collaboratively. However, continuing steady improvements in literacy and numeracy skills are helping pupils to develop more effective skills for the future.

The effectiveness of provision

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is much improved and is providing children with better access to a variety of activities indoors and outside. Resources of a higher quality are stimulating children's interest across the areas of learning. The organisation of the classrooms and the deployment of adults in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1 are enabling more independent learning and more sustained involvement in the different activities on offer. However, in the Reception class there are occasions when adults' questioning is too intense and does not give children sufficient time to reflect on their learning or to talk with one another.

The quality of teaching is improving and is becoming more consistent. These improvements are evident in most classes throughout the school. Teachers' planning is much better. In almost all cases there is information within it of how activities are to be matched to meet the full range of needs in the class. However, the extent and detail of this remain more variable. In many lessons this planning for different

abilities is also matched by carefully selected resources to provide for different needs. All lessons now start with clear explanations of what learning is to take place and how the pupils can demonstrate this. In the better lessons, pupils are starting to develop a checklist of how they can tackle a problem and measure their success. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils created their own checklist for solving problems, showing clearly that they understood how to undertake the tasks.

Better deployment and involvement of the support staff mean they are taking a stronger role in lessons in helping pupils to learn. This includes making records of progress and supporting lower-attaining groups with simplified activities. The support staff for the deaf and hearing impaired pupils continue to enable these pupils to take a full part in lessons. This is a result of their high expectations and clear and effective communication skills. In a Year 3 science lesson, for example, they extended the understanding of all the pupils of the vocabulary linked to magnetism. They enabled the deaf pupils to show the class that they knew the term 'repel' as well as 'attract'. Lessons are generally more engaging, particularly those involving practical activities. Occasionally the pace reduces because a lack of clear direction results in the pupils' over-excitement becoming a barrier to their learning. Sometimes too long is spent by the whole class listening to the teacher or to one another, rather than starting on an activity.

In most lessons, sufficient time is now set aside at the end of the lesson for pupils to review their work. However, there are occasions when the teacher tells the pupils how well they have done, rather than giving them time to evaluate their own or others' learning. Sometimes too many questions remain insufficiently focused to tease out accurately individual pupils' gains in knowledge or understanding. In some other lessons, an activity carries on regardless of pupils' responses and there is no adjustment to the lesson in light of these or no opportunity for pupils to review their learning so far. However, at the whole-school level, the assessments made of pupils' attainment and progress are considerably more accurate and provide a much better basis on which to plan the next steps in learning. Marking is much improved and is far more consistent in most subjects in most classes. The quality of advice and guidance given to pupils, particularly in literacy work, leaves them in no doubt as to how they can improve their work. The curriculum continues to improve and now gives greater emphasis to improving pupils' literacy as well as their speaking and listening skills.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment – **satisfactory**

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school has well-focused development plans, which are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the school's progress in securing the necessary improvements. The acting headteacher, with the assistance of the executive headteacher and her

leadership team, has made a strong start in improving the quality of the school's evaluations of teaching and learning. As a result, the acting headteacher and other senior staff within the school are becoming better placed to work independently of the partnership school. The acting headteacher's identification of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching is sharp and her judgements are increasingly rigorous and accurate. This means that the school is better placed to develop the monitoring of teaching and learning further and to check the progress of individual staff in addressing the areas for improvement identified by this monitoring. The partnership with the National Support School is proving effective in helping to develop the leadership and teaching skills of the staff, for example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in subject leadership and in developing the work of the support staff. This partnership has also extended the opportunities for staff to observe good and outstanding practice, which is resulting in some of the improvements in the quality of the school's work.

Considerably more accurate and rigorous assessments of pupils' attainment and progress provide an increasingly consistent and secure foundation for use in the classroom to plan work which challenges all pupils. There is clear evidence of better systems to track progress and to set more ambitious targets for pupils' attainment in both the short and the longer term. Assessments are more consistent and are used more effectively to identify strengths and gaps in pupils' understanding and knowledge. Staff are beginning to develop a greater shared understanding as to the next steps in providing for individuals and groups.

The members of the interim executive board bring strong experience and expertise in primary education. This, their regular visits and the considerably more accurate information they have about the school, place the board members in a better position to hold the school's leaders and managers to account for their effectiveness and to provide them with the necessary support.

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

- Ensure leaders and managers drive improvements – **good**

External support

The local authority has taken the judicious decision that the external support for the school is provided primarily by the National Support School. The executive headteacher and her senior team have been instrumental in securing the improvements to date. This has included tackling the weaknesses in teaching and in providing high quality and consistent advice and guidance on improving assessment, teaching, the curriculum and the school environment. This is starting to empower the acting headteacher and her staff in improving provision and outcomes. The executive headteacher, in consultation with the interim executive board and the local authority, has also taken a key role in starting to resolve the school's complex staffing issues. The local authority's school improvement adviser provides helpful support for the acting headteacher as she settles into her new role.