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18 November 2010

Mrs J Connor
Headteacher
Leigh Primary School
Walker Lane
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 5PL

Dear Mrs Connor

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Leigh Primary School

Following my visit with additional inspector Jennifer Platt to your school on 16 and 17 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 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 – satisfactory

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

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 Director of Children's Services for Tameside.

Yours sincerely

Angela Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- Raise attainment in mathematics to bring it in line with national expectations, by ensuring that methods of teaching numeracy are applied consistently and effectively by all staff.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - rigorous and effective monitoring of the quality of teaching
 - developing the effective use of ongoing informal assessment in lessons
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of marking and in the use of learning targets for individuals, so that pupils always have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work and of what the next steps in their learning should be.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on raising attainment and ensure that the school meets all of its statutory responsibilities by:
 - developing and implementing a strategic long-term plan for the school's improvement, tailored to meet the needs of the school and its pupils
 - ensuring that provision to safeguard pupils meets all statutory requirements
 - ensuring that the governing body provides challenge as well as support and that it holds the school fully to account for pupils' attainment and progress and for the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding provision.
- Improve attendance, by developing and implementing a programme of concerted and effective actions to promote good attendance.

Special measures: monitoring of Leigh Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 November 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and observed 13 lessons. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, teaching staff, support staff, pupils, the Chair, vice-chair and a member of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority who is also the School Improvement Partner.

Context

Since the school was judged to require special measures, a new headteacher has been appointed and a local authority mathematics consultant has been seconded as a second deputy headteacher. Seven teachers and a support assistant have left the school; six teachers, a support assistant and a learning mentor joined the school in September 2010, with further internal teaching appointments completed. Nearly all teaching staff are either permanent or have fixed term contracts; one class is currently taught by a supply teacher.

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

Following a detailed review by the new leadership team of the school's 2010 Key Stage 2 assessment results for Year 6 pupils, the school's data indicate that, compared to 2009, attainment declined in English at expected and higher levels but remained broadly similar in mathematics. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 fell significantly, particularly in reading. Attainment overall remains low.

Pupils' current progress, however, as indicated in lesson visits and workbooks is improving overall with evidence of greater consistency in provision between classes and year groups; this is particularly the case in mathematics, where better pupil progress is evident, particularly in Key Stage 2 as a result of individual teacher support and a full review of planning and resources.

The school's new leaders have recognised that previous assessment information is not reliable and have worked swiftly and effectively, with the support of the local authority to fully reassess, moderate and secure current pupil progress data. Whole-school assessment and tracking systems have been introduced to monitor both pupils' attainment and progress towards expected targets. This work has been supported further through training on 'assessing pupils' progress' and the scheduled introduction of 'pupil progress' meetings.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise attainment in mathematics to bring it in line with national expectations, by ensuring that methods of teaching numeracy are applied consistently and effectively by all staff – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

In lessons and during social times, pupils behave well and relationships are good. School leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy and pupils confirm that behaviour is better, particularly at social times with the introduction of different break times for younger pupils and increased supervision overall. Pupils report that they enjoy school and feel safe.

The school has taken a rigorous approach to reducing pupil absence; leaders have introduced an extensive range of procedures, including the appointment of key support personnel and detailed communication to both pupils and families. The profile and importance of attendance is well understood by school staff. As a result, there is evidence of increased attendance for younger Key Stage 2 pupils. However, overall attendance remains below the national average.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve attendance, by developing and implementing a programme of concerted and effective actions to promote good attendance – inadequate

The effectiveness of provision

The overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Across the school staffing is stable and school leaders, teachers and support staff are working effectively together to secure better practice and improve pupils' performance. Most lessons observed by inspectors were at least satisfactory; approximately one third of all lessons seen were good.

In the most successful lessons, key factors included high expectations; activities well matched to pupils' ability levels; targeted questions to assess pupils' progress and challenge their thinking and the promotion of pupil discussion to further develop understanding, with teaching assistants making a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils enjoyed these lessons and accelerated progress was evident. Pupils made slower gains in their learning in those lessons where activities were less demanding or similar for all pupils and where there was an overemphasis on support and consolidation, rather than challenge.

School leaders fully recognise the rapid gains required by pupils to overcome previous underachievement and have introduced arrangements to assess and improve classroom practice. Provision has been rigorously monitored by checking the quality of planning and pupils' workbooks, and formally observing all teaching staff. Detailed lesson feedback, valued by teachers, ongoing 'drop-in' observations and well-targeted professional development have resulted in greater consistency and improvements in classroom practice. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school.

Marking of pupils' workbooks is regular with examples of constructive comments, particularly in both numeracy and literacy books. Pupils indicate that the new marking system and teachers' comments help them to understand what they need to do to improve further. The quality of written feedback in workbooks, however, is not yet wholly consistent across classes or subjects. Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, are generally aware of their curricular targets and are able to outline examples in relation to their literacy and numeracy groups.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - rigorous and effective monitoring of the quality of teaching
 - developing the effective use of ongoing informal assessment in lessons
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of marking and in the use of learning targets for individuals, so that pupils always have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work and of what the next steps in their learning should be – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school's determination to make rapid improvements is clearly evident. In this, the leadership of the new headteacher has been pivotal. Aply supported by the deputy headteacher, and a committed staff, she has been able to make an effective start in tackling all improvement areas identified at the previous inspection.

The school has a clear strategic plan, which includes actions to secure progress in the areas required by inspectors alongside further key priorities for the school. This work is reviewed regularly, with actions, personnel responsible and timescales evident. The roles of senior leaders have been reviewed and focused specifically on whole-school priority areas. Subject leaders feel well supported and are developing a clearer understanding of their responsibility in securing improvements in pupils' performance. The school has put in place policies and procedures which provide a framework to support improvements, particularly in teaching, notably mathematics, assessment, attendance, safeguarding and leadership. As a result, the quality of

provision is more consistent and improving, with a sharper focus on pupils' attainment and targets.

The school, working with the local authority, has acted decisively to ensure safeguarding arrangements and health and safety procedures are robust. Child protection training, risk assessments, site safety and the required checks on adults working in the school now meet requirements. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities regarding health and safety and safeguarding issues. The school has designated child protection and health and safety officers.

The governing body is working more effectively with a full representative complement of governors and has a clearer understanding of its role in monitoring the progress and impact of the school's work. Relevant well-attended training and the introduction of the 'interim strategic group' with additional local authority governors has enabled the governing body to focus on key areas and provide challenge to the leadership. There is now greater strategic and first-hand engagement from governors, including link roles for school priority areas, involvement in lesson observations and visits to check safeguarding arrangements.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the impact of leadership and management on raising attainment and ensure that the school meets all of its statutory responsibilities by:
 - developing and implementing a strategic long-term plan for the school's improvement, tailored to meet the needs of the school and its pupils
 - ensuring that provision to safeguard pupils meets all statutory requirements
 - ensuring that the governing body provides challenge as well as support and that it holds the school fully to account for pupils' attainment and progress and for the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding provision
 - satisfactory

External support

The local authority's statement of action has been evaluated and fulfils Ofsted's requirements. All the key issues are clearly identified with the specific support and challenge required to secure improvement. Targets in key areas are in line with those indicated in the school's improvement plan. Good support has been provided in relation to the appointment of the new headteacher and deputy headteacher, changes in teaching and support personnel, the development of the governing body and safeguarding issues.

The school confirms that the support provided, particularly on subject provision, assessment and leadership is having a beneficial impact and is appropriately matched to the school's priorities. The School Improvement Partner has a good

overview of the school's work and effectively monitors progress and the level of support required. Productive partnership arrangements have also supported improvements, particularly in aspects of provision and safeguarding; partners include a local school and Greater Manchester Challenge.

Priorities for further improvement

- The school's priorities remain the four key issues for improvement recommended in May 2010.