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10 March 2011

Mrs Jude Grundy
Headteacher
Crawford Primary School
Crawford Road
London
SE5 9NF

Dear Mrs Grundy,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Crawford Primary School

Following my visit with Jane Chesterfield, Additional Inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 March 2011, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2009. 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 – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.

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 Southwark.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen McShane
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Secure consistently good teaching that accelerates pupils' rates of progress with their learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers receive the appropriate professional development to help them plan lessons which enable all pupils to make at least good progress
 - making sure that senior leaders regularly check that the actions taken to improve the quality of teachers' lesson plans are accelerating the rate of pupils' progress
 - ensuring that, by February half term, all lesson planning for English, mathematics and science includes tasks matched to pupils' differing learning needs.
- Immediately secure consistent use of assessment in each class so that:
 - marking makes clear to pupils how to improve their work
 - the use of targets means that all pupils know the next steps they need to take to improve their work
 - lessons are well matched to pupils' learning needs so that they make more rapid progress in gaining knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Build the capacity of the school's leadership by:
 - building the capacity of the senior leadership team as soon as possible
 - strengthening the leadership skills of middle managers by the end of this term, with a plan for their ongoing development for the rest of the year.

Special measures: monitoring of Crawford Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 March 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with management teams and staff, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority and London City Challenge. They spoke with pupils and parents and carers.

Context

With two members of staff leaving and actions taken to improve the quality of teaching there have been a number of changes of class teachers. Four classes are now being taught by supply teachers. At the time of the visit one of the teachers had worked at the school for one day. The other teachers had been at the school for a number of weeks.

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

The schools' data, pupils' books and learning in lessons continue to show that progress of pupils in the school is uneven. It is closely related to the quality of teaching. In a minority of year groups, pupils are now making better progress and they are making up for lost time so that the gap between their attainment and the national average is closing. In one year group, pupils' work is consistently of better quality, with evidence of high challenge and good presentation. However, in some other year groups, pupils' work does not show evidence of better and sustained learning. Progress is frequently still inadequate. Work is often unfinished and untidy.

Since the last visit pupils in Key Stage 1 are learning their letters and sounds more systematically through a more consistent approach to teaching. They are beginning to apply their new learning in their writing. Targeted groups are improving the learning of those pupils at risk of not making sufficient progress in year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make better progress in intervention groups and in some classes than in others.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The majority of pupils are well behaved. They move around the school safely and settle quickly in lessons and assembly. They are welcoming to visitors and happy to talk about their work. Pupils clearly enjoy the newly opened breakfast club and say that it is making a difference and helping them to be more ready for learning in the classroom.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching has not improved enough since the last inspection visit. The new supply teachers have been successful in getting to know their classes and establishing appropriate routines so that pupils are beginning to learn more. The way in which learning objectives of a lesson are planned – ‘What I am looking for’ (WILF) and ‘We are learning today’ (WALT) – is now consistently applied through the school. It is more effective in introducing what is expected from the pupils in some lessons, although the amount of challenge remains variable. In a few lessons the WALT and WILF system is used effectively to engage the pupils in assessing their work. Better teaching seen during the visit was characterised by high expectations and consistent challenge with interesting and relevant activities, for example in the exploration of shapes in Year 2, the acquisition of early number skills in the nursery and the teaching of mathematics and English in Year 6.

The school’s own monitoring and observations during the visit show that there is still too much inadequate teaching in the school. In too many lessons the intended learning is confused. At times, teachers’ subject knowledge is not sufficient to ensure that they have sufficient grasp of the skills and knowledge that the pupils need to acquire. This means that while resources, materials and activities are planned, pupils often complete tasks that are not purposeful enough and do not provide sufficient continuity so that they can build up their knowledge. In too many lessons, activities are not supporting learning. This is particularly the case when pupils are asked to work independently. In addition, separate activities are planned for groups who may have particular needs, but these are too often merely making the work simpler. This occupies the pupils but does not lead to new learning. Too frequently, pupils who are more able are not challenged enough in lessons. There are a number of additional adults supporting in classes and they say they now feel more included in planning and more knowledgeable about the lessons. Their impact on learning remains variable through the school.

Marking remains very uneven and is not consistently leading to improvements in pupils’ work. In a few year groups it is developing into a dialogue with the teacher and it is clear that the pupil responds to the suggestions and this is revisited. Pupils spoken to felt that it made a difference and helped them. In the majority of year groups marking is regular and detailed but too often is having little effect. Issues raised are not followed up. There is a lack of clarity in the use of ‘next steps’ stickers in books. In some books the purpose of written feedback is confused, particularly for younger pupils who are at early stages of reading. The school’s data on pupil progress are now clearer and are related to national expectations and can be analysed more effectively, although there remain some significant gaps and weaknesses in certain year groups because of staff changes. Work with the local authority has ensured that there is more confidence in assessing pupils’ work and assigning levels. Pupils know their targets and in the classes where these are used effectively they are displayed and referred to during lessons and are part of more effective ongoing assessment for learning.

The school's curriculum is rightly focused on improving literacy and numeracy but it continues to offer opportunities to different class groups to enhance their experiences, such as work with local theatre groups and a newly established football club. In some year groups, time is not used effectively and there is not sufficient emphasis given to punctuality. Both of these have negative effects on learning.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas of improvement:

Secure consistently good teaching that accelerates pupils' rates of progress with their learning – inadequate.

Immediately secure consistent use of assessment in each class – inadequate.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders and governors have a realistic picture about the unevenness and slowness of progress. The headteacher has been successful in building up the morale of staff who remain committed to the school. Parents and carers speak warmly about her and the improvements she has made since her arrival. She has taken important action to raise the expectations of staff and tackle the inadequate teaching in some of the classes. However, there remain significant issues of performance that still have not been sufficiently addressed. Middle managers are now more confident in their knowledge and management of their subject, for example presenting information to governors for the first time. Their impact on improving the quality of teaching, particularly in eradicating inadequate teaching, has not been sufficient. Teachers' planning, pupils' books and teaching are regularly monitored and all teachers have development plans. There is regular training that includes clarifying expectations. Follow-up to ensure improvement and consistency is not tenacious or rigorous enough.

Governors have supported the school well in ensuring that there are improvements in the premises and budgeting. They are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about teaching, learning and standards and continue to ask searching questions of the school. They continue to be receptive to exploring different options to secure improvement and have approved work on a restructuring programme to secure the long-term improvement of teaching in the school. They are less confident of securing short-term improvement in light of difficulties recruiting permanent staff, the range of different issues that have to be addressed and the current capacity of the leadership.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas of improvement:

Build the capacity of the school's leadership – inadequate.

External support

The impact of individuals from the local authority or London Challenge can be seen in specific areas of improvement in the school, for example, the improvement in teaching in certain year groups, support for the headteacher in working with individual teachers and the consistency that is now in place to monitor teaching. However, all parties recognise that the support offered has not been effective enough to bring about sufficient improvement overall. There have been a number of meetings to explore different options to further enhance management of the school and support teaching more. At the time of the inspection visit, new plans were being devised with a clear recognition that the school still requires considerable support and strong action has to be taken urgently.