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10 March 2011

Mrs G Goodman
Headteacher
Cobblers Lane Primary School
Cobblers Lane
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF8 2HN

Dear Mrs Goodman,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Cobblers Lane Primary School

Following my visit 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 second 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 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

Newly Qualified Teachers may 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 12 May 2010

- As a matter of urgency, ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their progress and achievement in all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better throughout the school
 - ensuring that pupils are fully aware of what they have to learn, are sufficiently challenged in their work and know what they need to do to improve it further
 - improving pupils' enjoyment of lessons and their skills of independent learning.
- Improve behaviour so that all pupils and staff are safe in school by enabling teachers consistently to manage pupils' behaviour successfully.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that all staff work together to achieve a shared vision for the school's success
 - implementing and monitoring the progress of a coherent development plan that is focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and the outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the leadership team fully to account for its work and meets all its statutory responsibilities.
- Improve attendance by reversing the current decline and ensuring that all pupils attend regularly.

Special measures: monitoring of Cobblers Lane Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection from 8 to 9 March 2011

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, a group of pupils, the School Improvement Partner and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board.

Context

The substantive headteacher at the time of the previous inspection has left the school. An interim headteacher was appointed in January 2011 and will remain at the school until the end of the spring term. The Interim Executive Board (IEB) is planning to appoint a temporary headteacher for the remainder of the academic year. It is expected that a new substantive headteacher will commence in September 2011.

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

At the time of the previous inspection attainment was low and progress inadequate. However, an analysis of data presented by the school, a scrutiny of pupils' work and the outcomes of lesson observations conducted during the inspection indicate that many pupils are now making better progress. Pupils currently in Year 6 may attain standards in English and mathematics in the 2011 national tests that are approaching the national average. This would represent significant improvement.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour has continued to improve and this is acknowledged by teachers, teaching assistants, ancillary staff and most significantly the pupils themselves. As a result, pupils are concentrating better during lessons and engaging in their learning. This is why pupils are making better progress throughout the school, feel safe and enjoy their learning. A noticeable feature is the way in which pupils demonstrate good manners and courtesy to adults and visitors. This has not happened by chance. Improvement has been secured because of high expectations communicated by the school's leaders and the total commitment of all staff to adhere to school policy and practice. A small minority of pupils still has to be monitored and managed carefully. However, the school deals with incidents of poor behaviour well because it is making good use of the expertise in behaviour management that exists within the school. The focus on positive behaviour with associated rewards is viewed favourably by pupils and this is proving to be motivational.

Attendance continues to improve. The school has worked hard to raise pupils', parents' and carers' awareness of the importance of attending school. A number of initiatives have been

promoted over the past two terms including: an attendance newsletter and leaflet for parents and carers; rewards for individual pupils; and a weekly certificate for the class with the best attendance. Good relationships with external services ensure that absence is monitored carefully and followed up effectively. All of these measures are improving levels of attendance. The most recent attendance figures produced by the school show an increase of 3% since the previous inspection.

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

- improve behaviour so that all pupils and staff are safe in school by enabling teachers consistently to manage pupils' behaviour successfully – good
- improve attendance by reversing the current declining trend and ensuring that all pupils attend regularly – good

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching observed during the monitoring inspection reflects a much-improved profile since the school was judged to require special measures. There is a direct link between improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. A positive learning environment is now evident in all classes and pupils are more enthusiastic to participate actively in all activities. Aspects of teaching that have improved noticeably include: higher expectations of pupils; lesson planning; questioning; and more opportunities for pupils to work independently and discuss work with each other. The quality of marking has improved beyond recognition. Pupils' work is evaluated and helpful guidance is offered on how to improve. Senior leaders are conscious that the next step to accelerate progress is to translate this guidance into short-term targets that pupils can understand. The current organisation of the school day does not allow pupils to maximise the learning opportunities available to them during the morning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school is aware of this and plans are in place to address the matter. In order to raise attainment, Years 5 and 6 are set for English and mathematics. Intervention groups designed to boost the progress of targeted pupils have also been recently introduced. It is too early to evaluate the impact that these initiatives are having on progress, however, it is a reflection on how school leaders are being pro-active in the drive to raise standards.

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

- raise pupils' achievement and improve their progress and achievement in all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better throughout the school - good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

With one headteacher leaving the school and another commencing in January 2011, senior leaders have done well to sustain and improve the quality of provision provided by the school. The appointment of the substantive deputy headteacher has provided continuity, particularly with regard to behaviour management. All staff are working effectively together

and share a common vision for the school's success. It is the combination of these factors that has meant that there has been no let up in the drive to take the school forward. The school improvement plan continues to focus on the key areas for improvement and senior leaders carefully monitor and evaluate the impact recently introduced innovations are having on pupils' learning. Middle leaders are developing their understanding of their role. They receive support to enable them to fulfil their role effectively; this will continue for the foreseeable future. The IEB monitors the work of the school very well and holds senior leaders to account. Members of the IEB have a good understanding of the schools' strengths and areas requiring further development.

Safeguarding policies and systems are now in place and reviewed on a regular basis. The single central record meets requirements. As a result of improvements to pupils' behaviour the school is a much safer place than it was at the time of the previous inspection.

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

- improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels - good
- as a matter of urgency, ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met – good.

External support

The quality and impact of the external services provided by the local authority and the work of the School Improvement Partner continue to be effective.