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11 March 2011

Mrs Christine Lacey
Headteacher
Hallgate Primary School Cottingham
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Cottingham
HU16 4DD

Dear Mrs Lacey,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hallgate Primary School Cottingham

Following my visit to your school on 9 and 10 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 third 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 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

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Raise standards and improve the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning to make it at least consistently good in all classes
 - ensuring that pupils are given the guidance they need to improve their work
 - using assessment information to match work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities
 - developing a more creative curriculum, which matches pupils' needs and interests
 - challenging the more-able pupils to ensure that they achieve their potential.
- Improving the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all groups of pupils are meeting challenging targets
 - identifying a manageable number of key priorities and producing detailed action plans to bring about improvement
 - making the best use of available time and resources so that pupils stay motivated and engaged throughout the lesson.
- Improve the school's governance by:
 - developing the role of the governing body in monitoring, evaluating and driving the school's improvement
 - ensuring the governing body holds teachers to account for the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that policies meet statutory requirements and are kept up to date.
- Improve outcomes and the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that indoor and outdoor activities are challenging and purposeful and clearly linked to all areas of learning
 - using day-to-day assessment more effectively to inform the next steps in learning for individual children
 - providing better opportunities for developing children's creative skills.

Special measures: monitoring of Hallgate Primary School Cottingham

Report from the third monitoring inspection on the 9 and 10 March 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight of the ten classes in the school. He scrutinised school documents and reports. Discussions took place with staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection the school has continued to experience disruption in staffing. There are still long-term absences and during this inspection the Year 6 class teacher who is also the Key Stage 2 leader and school literacy coordinator was absent. Moreover, a Year 1 class teacher has left. The capabilities of two teachers are being progressed through the local authority procedures. However, one member of staff has returned to work. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader, who is also the acting assistant headteacher, has had her secondment, which was due to end at Easter, extended until the end of the current academic year. In addition, the acting deputy headteacher's appointment has been made permanent.

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

Scrutiny of the school's latest progress data reveals that pupils' achievements are mixed across year groups and within subjects. Nonetheless, there are clearer signs of some improvement than at the time of the second monitoring inspection. Consequently, an increasing proportion of pupils are recovering some of the previously lost ground in their learning. Within this headline there are examples of accelerated performance in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2, but equally some very slow progress in Years 3 and 5. The picture within Years 4 and 6 is more variable among subjects, ranging from good to inadequate progress being made. Writing remains the weakest aspect across all year groups. The relative progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more-able pupils remains a cause for concern. More positively, staffs' use of assessment information to match work closely to pupils' needs is becoming more consistent in the main school. The Early Years Foundation Stage team are making good use of the wealth of more accurate data they are gathering to inform the next steps in learning for individual children.

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

- raise standards and improve the rate of pupil's progress - satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

The nine joint lesson observations with senior leaders revealed that although inconsistent, the impact of teaching on learning is improving. There is less barely satisfactory and weaker practice and evidence of some previously satisfactory teaching moving to good. Staff are clearly working very conscientiously to improve their teaching. They have largely been receptive to the coaching and mentoring they have received which is beginning to bear some fruit. The focus on enhancing the quality and effectiveness of planning, delivery and assessment has seen staff begin to rise to the challenge of consistently facilitating learning situations. This has allowed pupils to develop, apply and consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum and then to, evaluate precisely what the next steps in pupils' learning should be. The good deployment and effectiveness of teaching assistants was more apparent during this monitoring inspection than during the previous inspection.

Curricular provision continues to improve and is increasingly characterised by a diverse and interesting programme of activities centred on principal themes. During discussions with pupils' representatives from all year groups, they enthused about the range of topics they have studied and how enjoyable they are finding the new approach to learning. This often includes linked practical activities such as, designing and building castles as part of the witches and wizards theme; interpreting information about whales and dolphins as part of the under the sea theme, and hypothesizing about what might happen by mixing yeast, water and sugar as part of the staying alive theme. In addition, the visits continue for every year group, including the Year 6 trip to France and the Year 3 visit to Beverley Friary. Pupils also talked excitedly about the many roles they can adopt for the 'rock challenge' including stage crew, video director, hair and make-up stylists and performers. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is going from strength- to-strength. Staff continue to make innovative refinements to the indoor and outdoor settings, and to their programmes of study which are enriching children's experiences, promoting their independence and developing their skills and dispositions more effectively. Children's enjoyment of this rich environment is obvious.

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

- improve the outcomes and the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage - satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders, the governing body and the local authority have responded very positively to the gauntlet that was thrown down by the inadequate progress judgements from the second monitoring inspection. The headteacher in particular has adopted a steelier persona, which has left staff in no doubt that she and the deputy headteacher will do whatever it takes to get the school back on an even keel. To this end there is now no hiding place and their resolute approach, premised on greater staff accountability and their consistent demonstration of efficiency and effectiveness, is having an impact. Senior leaders have grasped the nettle by challenging, as well as supporting inadequacy. They continue to work

hard, systematically and rigorously monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken, embedding key strategies, and taking tough decisions where necessary. As a result, their impact is growing but the desired significant improvement in pupils' achievement is not yet evident. They remain resolute and very clear about what needs to be done to secure further improvements.

Although there remains much work still to do leaders are moving in the right direction.

Members of the governing body are making a more effective contribution to driving school improvement. A reconstituted committee structure, additional training, and some key appointments have ensured that they are better placed to provide the necessary challenge and support the school needs to help it improve. The onus is now firmly on carrying out rigorous and regular scrutiny of all aspects of the school's work. The monitoring and evaluation sub-group is influential in overseeing developments and evaluating the extent to which their own, and leaders' actions are having a positive impact on tackling the school's main issues. Informed by recent training, teachers, phase leaders and senior managers are increasingly being called to account for the progress pupils are making by members of the governing body. Systems to assure that statutory requirements are met, regularly reviewed and updated in line with latest guidance are now operational and robust.

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

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels - satisfactory
- improve the school's governance - satisfactory

External support

The local authority and the link officer in particular, are providing the school with considerable, wide-ranging and influential support. This assistance, monitoring and challenge has encompassed all phases of learning and continues to include input to improve: outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage; pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2; the quality of assessment, teaching and the curriculum; the effectiveness of leaders and managers, and of governance. The local authority has further extended the secondment of the assistant headteacher, and have arranged for an experienced Key Stage 2 teacher from another school to provide additional support to staff.