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Mr S Turner
Headteacher
Killamarsh Junior School
38 Sheffield Road
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Dear Mr Turner

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Killamarsh Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 22-23 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

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 Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise standards, particularly in English, to above the national average and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good, and ensuring that there is consistent effective practice throughout the school
 - ensuring that assessment information is used effectively to set work that accurately matches the next steps of all pupils' learning
 - providing training for staff to ensure accurate grading of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science according to the National Curriculum levels.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school by:
 - increasing the amount of weekly management time for the deputy headteacher and wider leadership team, to enable them to organise, structure and implement the monitoring, recording and evaluation of the performance of the school
 - using the information from the monitoring and evaluation to address identified needs promptly and record the outcomes
 - defining and developing the role of the middle managers, subject leaders, coordinators and teaching assistants to help ensure that they have a consistently good impact on pupils' achievements and standards.

Special measures: monitoring of Killamarsh Junior School

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on 22-23 March 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, all other staff with leadership responsibilities, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

One teacher has been absent through illness since the start of February 2011. Reorganisation of the timetables of the current staff has enabled the school to provide effective cover during this period of absence.

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

The upward trend in pupils' attainment continues. The school's monitoring information shows that standards are higher than at the same time last year in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in all year groups continues to accelerate with significant gains being made since the start of the school year, especially in Year 3 in all subjects and in Year 6 in reading and mathematics. The work undertaken to stimulate boys' interests and develop their writing skills continues to have a positive impact, especially in Year 5, where boys make better progress in writing than girls.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' attitudes in class are consistently good, largely because pupils find their lessons interesting and they feel cared for and valued by all staff. Pupils are polite and courteous. They are keen to share their successes and talk about what they are learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Behaviour is good, both in and around the school.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve and a greater proportion is now good or better. Most lessons are conducted at good pace and in a calm and orderly atmosphere. Some very good examples of pupils' paired work were seen during the inspection. For example, in a science lesson, pupils in Year 6 were able to discuss with great interest and maturity why certain metals rust and others do not, and how this has an impact on their use. No inadequate teaching was observed and the school's monitoring shows that all teaching is now consistently satisfactory or better.

Teaching assistants are mostly used well to support groups of pupils and individuals in lessons and through small group work at other times of the school day. During the inspection, two lessons were observed where the quality of teaching and learning was outstanding. In those lessons teachers were very clear about what they wanted pupils to learn, the work was effectively matched to pupils' different levels of attainment, teachers regularly checked on pupils' understanding and very effectively guided pupils through the small learning steps. The challenge for the school is to ensure that all teaching is consistently of good or better quality. Teachers' use of assessment information and their understanding of how to assess pupils' work against national curriculum levels are becoming embedded. Consequently, all groups of pupils are receiving greater challenge in lessons. There are examples of very effective marking of work which establishes a dialogue with individual pupils and helps them develop a clear understanding of how to improve their work. In some lessons, teachers successfully focus pupils' attention on how the work undertaken in the lesson helps them meet their targets for improvement. However, this is not yet fully embedded.

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

- Raise standards, particularly in English, to above the national average and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 by improving the quality of teaching and learning – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Improvements to the quality of teaching have been mainly due to senior leaders continuing to monitor pupils' progress, work with teachers in the classroom, observe pupils' learning in lessons and provide effective feedback to teachers. These processes, together with all leaders' clearer understanding of what makes effective teaching and learning, are major factors why the school's progress is good. Leaders at all levels have a much clearer understanding of their roles and have time allocated to fulfil them. The growing confidence of leaders at all levels is reflected in their determination to take greater control on school improvement with minimal guidance from the local authority. However, since being placed into special measures, the school has not placed enough emphasis on ensuring that all aspects of health and safety documentation are sufficiently robust and that processes are rigorously implemented and monitored.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school - good.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide very effective support and guidance to the school. It has correctly timed the reduction of its services in keeping with the requirements of the school for more independence and control, yet has given clear

guidance when required. The school reports that any requests for advice have continued to be accommodated in a swift and helpful manner.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all aspects of health and safety documentation are sufficiently robust and processes are rigorously implemented and monitored.