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31 March 2011

Mr A Eastwood
Headteacher
Fountain Primary School
Fountain Street
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West Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Eastwood

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Fountain Primary School

Following my visit with Mr Keith Bardon, additional inspector, to your school on 29 and 30 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 January 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

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 Leeds.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith
Additional inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 21 and 22 January 2010

- Monitor pupils' attendance more rigorously and take both general and targeted action to improve it.
- Ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory and an increasing proportion is good or better in order to enable pupils to reach the standards they are capable of.
- Improve the curriculum by promoting basic skills more effectively, securing pupils' interest and engagement, and providing more opportunities to develop personal skills.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management across the school.

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Fountain Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection from 29 to 30 March 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, the Chair and two members of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

A new deputy headteacher started in January 2011. The temporary post of assistant headteacher, funded by the local authority and filled by a local authority Lead Teacher for Learning for over 12 months, comes to an end at the end of this term. Two senior leaders are on maternity leave. Their classroom responsibilities are covered by temporary teaching staff. Their management responsibilities are shared between other senior leaders. They are due to return to the school during the summer term to a job-share post with leadership responsibilities. The school is advertising for a lead teacher for learning in Key Stage 2 to be appointed for September 2011.

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

Pupils continue to be keen and eager learners. They say that they are enjoying lessons more because there have been some really interesting and exciting activities and topics, for example, the work on silent movies in Year 6. Pupils are becoming more confident learners and have a greater understanding of how to improve because staff have started to focus more on developing pupils' generic learning skills. Pupils are gaining more confidence in their writing because there is a greater emphasis on talking things through and drama activities, and because there are more exciting activities that they want to write about. Pupils continue to develop their ability to work independently through the use of 'learning logs' that enable pupils to follow up class work at home. There are fewer occasions when pupils become less engaged. When this happens it is usually because the teacher talks for too long.

Analysis of school data, based on teachers' assessments and tests in February 2011, shows that attainment is rising and that progress is accelerating at a good rate in all year groups. There is greater consistency between year groups and classes and across subjects. Girls, boys, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those at risk of not reaching age-related expectations are making similarly accelerated progress. The proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations in reading, mathematics and writing in all year groups has increased. The greatest improvement is in mathematics, which was the weaker subject in the 2010 national tests and has been a focus for the school since the last visit. The performance of current Year 6

pupils is on track to exceed national minimum targets and their progress has improved considerably since the inspection in January 2010. However, many of these pupils are still catching up on previous underachievement and the current Year 6 remains the weakest year group, with fewer pupils reaching age-related expectations in all subjects.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour continues to improve and is good in most lessons. In response to the school's vigilance, pupils' attendance has continued to rise. Additional, well-considered strategies for promoting punctuality and good attendance have been initiated since the last monitoring inspection, including the use of text messaging to make checks on first day absence. The number of parents making early contact with the school when their children are ill has increased and the importance of good attendance has become firmly established. As a result of their full attendance over a given period, two pupils received prestigious awards from the local authority.

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

- Monitor pupils' attendance more rigorously and take both general and targeted action to improve it – good

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching and learning are improving more securely. The proportion of good or better lessons has increased and, occasionally, there is an example of outstanding teaching and learning. In this inspection no inadequate teaching was observed.

Teachers' planning is more consistent. Learning intentions and the steps that need to be taken are increasingly effective in helping pupils to know how they can succeed. Lessons are better structured and purposeful and there is a more-rapid pace to learning in many classrooms. Teachers' expectations of pupils are rising with more of the work pitched appropriately to age-related expectations. Pupils are more actively involved in learning. They enjoy discussing their work in many lessons, although there are still some lessons where pupils do not have enough opportunity to talk constructively about their work. In mathematics, there are significantly more opportunities for practical mathematics activities and, in an outstanding lesson, more-able pupils engaged in a challenging debate about 'capacity'.

Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work is improving. There is greater consistency in the way work is set out and, in some classes, handwriting is better formed. However, there remain variations between classes and weak presentation is not always commented upon in teachers' marking.

Staff are making better use of information on pupils' prior learning to plan tasks to match different needs, particularly for those pupils in need of additional support. Teaching assistants are increasingly supportive of less-able pupils. The intervention programmes are

helping to accelerate the progress of lower-attaining pupils. However, there remain inconsistencies in the level of challenge provided for more-able pupils.

More pupils are aware of their class and individual targets for writing and numeracy. Teachers refer to pupils' individual targets more frequently helping to ensure they are used to guide and improve work. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work has improved. The guidance produced by the school is helping to make sure there is greater consistency so that pupils have a better understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are responding to teachers' comments more frequently and making improvements to their work because teachers have set aside time for this during the school day. The school is improving the way that parents are involved in supporting their children's learning. A series of leaflets give useful guidance on how to encourage children's learning at home.

Curriculum development has continued to improve at a good pace and pupils talk more enthusiastically about the fun they have learning. Literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology are better planned as discrete lessons and across the curriculum. A recent focus on improving mathematics has led to more time spent in discrete lessons and, following consultation with pupils, there is more mathematics teaching within meaningful practical activities. Curriculum themes planned in conjunction with a local primary school are increasingly providing pupils with opportunities to develop their basic skills stimulated by interesting topics, such as the Year 2 work on pirates. Pupils have gained much from working cooperatively with pupils from another school and are looking forward to meeting them again.

The 'Skills for Success' programme, introduced in January, is increasingly successfully in developing pupils as confident learners. Pupils are able to explain how this is helping many aspects of their learning. Pupils value the improving range of extra-curricular activities the school provides.

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

- Ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory and an increasing proportion is good or better in order to enable pupils to reach the standards they are capable of – good
- Improve the curriculum by promoting basic skills more effectively, securing pupils' interest and engagement and providing more opportunities to develop personal skills – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

In the midst of the many changes in leadership since the inspection in January 2010 the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have maintained a clear vision and purpose. Since the previous monitoring inspection the leadership team has strengthened further and there are planned changes to it over the next two terms. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future model of leadership with a focus on developing learning and teaching, which is being implemented as new appointments are made.

The headteacher and senior leaders continue to be a driving force, sharing clear ambitions and setting high expectations of staff, pupils and themselves. They are becoming increasingly strategic through planning that is based on the findings of more-rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Inconsistencies in pupils' progress are recognised more rapidly and the school is more confident in taking action, analysing the reasons why and providing support for teachers or individual pupils. Staff continue to work with commitment towards common aims, looking for ways to further pupils' progress. For example, one year group team suggested a different grouping arrangement to differentiate better and promote progress in mathematics.

In partnership with local schools and with the support of external consultants, good progress has been made by leaders and staff in ensuring more-accurate assessment of pupils' progress. Senior leaders continue to use assessment information to hold teachers to account through half-termly pupil progress meetings. Analysis of assessment data continues to be used well to identify pupils at risk of not reaching age-related expectations. However, leaders have recognised the need to analyse the progress of each class even more closely to ensure that any underachievement of more-able pupils is recognised.

The school is less reliant on the local authority to provide support. Systems to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance and provision are more embedded. Staff are more confident in leading improvements from within the school and, in partnership with local schools; the flow of good practice is increasing in both directions.

Middle leaders are developing their leadership roles with the support of external consultancy and rigorous and supportive monitoring by senior leaders. Although leaders are making progress at different rates, they are taking increased responsibility for their own areas, making improvements to the curriculum and resources especially.

The governing body is gaining in confidence and skill and is fulfilling its monitoring role with increasing rigour. Governors have increased their knowledge of the school through more-frequent visits, guided by clear protocols. These visits are helping to improve relationships with school staff and enable governors to ask more-probing and challenging questions. The deficit budget has been reduced and is now balanced.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management across the school – good

External support

The good support provided by local authority consultants and advisers continues to be effective. With the growing competency of the school's leaders, the need for advice and support is decreasing.

The School Improvement Partner continues to challenge the governing body, holding it closely to account through the local authority joint review group.

The school continues to work successfully with Morley Victoria Primary School, particularly on developing the curriculum.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all activities in lessons fully challenge more-able pupils and check that they are accelerating their progress.