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20 May 2011

Mr Mattison
Headteacher
William Booth Primary and Nursery School
Notintone Street
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Nottingham
NG2 4QF

Dear Mr Mattison

Special measures: monitoring inspection of William Booth Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 18 May 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 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 – satisfactory.

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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham City.

Yours sincerely

Ceri Morgan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2010

- Raise attainment and improve progress in reading and writing throughout the school by:
 - enabling most pupils to achieve at least one full National Curriculum level of progress in reading and writing every two years, from their starting points at the beginning of Year 1 to the end of Year 6
 - ensuring that at least an hour in every school day is spent developing reading and writing through exciting and motivating curriculum themes
 - ensuring that writing and reading skills are systematically taught at an appropriate level in Reception and throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.

- Improve attendance by:
 - focusing on, and making sure that, parents and carers of pupils who are persistently absent fully understand both their statutory responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and the range of consequences if they do not
 - introducing positive incentives for children to attend school.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing a climate where excellence in academic achievement is highly valued and accurately measured
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching is judged by its impact on pupils' learning and academic progress.

Special measures: monitoring of William Booth Primary and Nursery School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 18 May 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised a range of key documents and a sample of pupils' work, and met with the headteacher, the senior management team and every teacher. They observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons and also met with two representative groups of pupils. Telephone conversations were held with the external consultant supporting the school, and further meetings were held with the new chair of the school's interim executive board (IEB) and the consultant headteacher.

Context

Since the inspection of December 2010 the school has received the support of a consultant headteacher from a nearby school and additional external consultants, both at classroom and leadership level. This additional resource has been brokered by the local authority. The governing body has been replaced by an IEB. The local authority issued the school with a formal warning notice in March 2011, outlining its concerns about the limited progress being made since the school became subject to special measures.

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

Pupils enjoy their time in school and receive high quality care and support. There is a strong team ethos and the school is a welcoming, attractive environment where thoughtful use is made of resources for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils have high levels of independence in their work. These strengths of the school remain evident as it grows in size to a full primary school, but have yet to lead to satisfactory academic achievement.

Standards of literacy and numeracy remain low but are improving slowly. There is, however, some variation in the rate of improvement emerging across the school, with most success in the younger classes. Progress in Key Stage 2 is less secure.

Pupils' reading is improving more rapidly than their writing. The school now assesses their progress more frequently and with increasing accuracy. The resulting data show that around three quarters of all pupils are now making satisfactory progress in both reading and writing, with a quarter making slower progress. In Years 3 and 4, only around half of all pupils are making securely satisfactory progress, particularly in their writing. Few pupils make rapid progress. Despite this, some key aspects of literacy are improving across the school, for example better

understanding of grammatical structures, the use of a wider vocabulary and improved editing skills when using laptop computers.

Pupils now have more dedicated reading and phonics sessions. These are helping raise attainment, although in some classes pupils sit with books attempting to read to each other, often without help. Also, the texts chosen are not always well matched to pupils' abilities, and are sometimes either too easy or too hard. Pupils use an increasingly rich vocabulary, understand technical terms such as 'simile' and 'adjective' and produce a greater amount of work. However, presentation remains scruffy, betraying a lack of pride in their work, and spelling is weak with limited evidence of any systematic spelling strategies.

Although the previous inspection report only makes reference to weaknesses in literacy, the school has correctly identified that standards in basic numeracy are also very low. Pupils do not have a secure grasp of number and most struggle to solve simple multiplication and subtraction problems. Weaknesses in reading also leave them ill-prepared to solve word problems. As a consequence the school has appropriately added improving attainment in mathematics to its priorities and planning.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- raise attainment and improve progress in reading and writing throughout the school – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The school has made good progress in improving attendance, which is now average overall. Patterns of attendance are monitored weekly and a good partnership with the education welfare service is encouraging better punctuality and attendance. The school has identified 12 pupils as persistent absentees and is working with their families to improve this. The most recent analysis shows that attendance is above average in some classes. This good progress is due largely to the deputy headteacher directly contacting the parents and carers of pupils with low attendance and explaining the close link between attendance levels and achievement. Families have responded well to this initiative, underlining the strong relationship between the school and its community.

Pupils show enthusiasm for the tasks they are asked to do and are responding positively to their new targets for achievement. They are safe, well cared for and have access to a wide range of good additional activities, especially sporting clubs. These are popular and well attended. The thoughtful approach to care means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains good, as is the behaviour of many. Pupils who exhibit high levels of need are supported well.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve attendance – good.

The effectiveness of provision

Every teacher was observed. No inadequate teaching was observed, showing an improvement since the previous inspection, but neither was there any good or outstanding practice. There are common reasons why teaching was capped as satisfactory. Relationships, the use of resources and behaviour management are generally better, but the inefficient use of lesson timings and complex or confusing expectations are weaker. Marking is variable in quality and although routinely supportive, often fails to correct inaccurate spellings or resolve misconceptions.

The timetable model adopted by the school is unorthodox. This results in some inefficient use of time, particularly at Key Stage 2. There are frequent changes to activities and the open-plan layout of the school provides plenty of distractions for pupils. The youngest pupils have extensive independent learning opportunities which are organised well by teachers and adults, but similar provision for the older pupils is less successful. There are some thoughtful sessions which are intended to provide greater challenge but, again for the older pupils, these lack sufficiently high expectations.

The school currently is generously staffed with additional adult help. This team supports and encourages pupils, and assesses their progress increasingly well. However, the deployment of additional adults has not led to high achievement and is unsustainable at this level.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

There was a significant delay in responding to the findings of the original inspection. This lost valuable time and led to the issuing of the local authority warning notice. However, since February leaders have made significant changes to practice. The senior management team monitor classroom practice regularly. The staff team are implementing change rapidly and willingly. The new IEB is of high calibre. The chair in particular has significant expertise in school improvement and is ambitious for the school. Attainment and pupils' progress are monitored regularly and have a higher profile than previously. There remains, however, an informality about some aspects of monitoring. For example, management team meetings are not formally recorded and the monitoring of lessons, although more frequent and appropriately focused on literacy, is not sufficiently precise. Strategic school planning shows limited evaluative comment. Basic record-keeping of the impact of consultant input and professional development is disorganised. This makes demonstrating the progress being made more difficult, and accountability more elusive.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve leadership and management – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority's statement of action and plan to support the school are satisfactory. The school was not fully involved in the consultation and preparation of the plan, although the additional capacity provided by consultants and external advisers is welcomed and generous. The appointment of the IEB as a vehicle for improvement has provided the potential for a more concise decision-making process. The impact of this additional expertise is satisfactory. It is already reflected in recent changes, but has not yet led to higher attainment.

Priorities for further improvement

- Undertake a review of the timetable, curriculum and teaching quality in Key Stage 2 to use in planning for school organisation in September 2011 and to help accommodate the growth to full primary provision.
- Refine the monitoring programme to have greater clarity of purpose and secure accurate judgements on the impact of teaching on attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Ensure records of meetings and decisions made are formalised and up to date.
- Evaluate the impact on learning of the heavy investment in additional adult support.