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19 May 2011

Mr H Wood
Headteacher
Cobblers Lane Primary School
Cobblers Lane
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF8 2HN

Dear Mr Wood,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Cobblers Lane Primary School

Following my visit with Mrs Naila Zaffar, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17 and 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 12 May 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 – 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 Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

Mr 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 third monitoring inspection from 17 to 18 May 2011

Evidence

Inspectors 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 (IEB).

Context

The substantive headteacher at the time of the previous inspection has left the school. Since September 2010 the school has been led by three temporary headteachers. The IEB has appointed a permanent headteacher with effect from the beginning of the autumn term 2011. Two members of staff have recently commenced a phased return to work following a period of sustained absence.

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

At the time of the last inspection attainment was low and progress inadequate. The previous monitoring inspection found that, while attainment in English, mathematics and science remained low, pupils were making better progress. This is still the case and is supported by an analysis of data presented by the school, a scrutiny of pupils' work and observations based on their responses and levels of engagement during lessons. Particularly notable progress is being made in reading and mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve significantly better in English and mathematics in the 2011 national tests than in the past three years. It is because pupils are making better progress that they are enjoying their learning. However, while pupils are making improved progress across the school, senior leaders are aware that the rate at which pupils progress is not as quick in lower Key Stage 2 as it is in other areas of the school.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning are continuing to improve. It is significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection and this is acknowledged by staff, including midday supervisors, and pupils. It is improving because school leaders are devoting resources and expertise in establishing and embedding effective systems relating to behaviour management. The number of detentions for unacceptable behaviour has significantly reduced over the past year and lessons are no longer disrupted by a small minority of unruly pupils. The contribution that improved behaviour is having on pupils' progress cannot be underestimated.

Attendance has improved steadily since the previous inspection and is currently in line with the national average. The school now monitors attendance closely and has introduced effective systems to follow up unexplained absence. The school is keen to develop a partnership with parents and carers in which the relationship between attendance and progress is stressed. The school is being pro-active in promoting good attendance through a range of incentives and rewards for pupils and this is proving successful.

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning has improved noticeably since the school was judged to require special measures. A positive climate for learning is evident in classrooms throughout the school, expectations are higher and pupils are more engaged in their learning. Despite the improvements that have been secured since the beginning of the academic year, there is some variability in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Over the past year teachers have developed their skills, particularly with regard to assessment and ensuring that work that is both challenging and well matched to pupils' learning needs. As more data relating to pupils' progress are produced and analysed, it is becoming increasingly apparent that these features are not as well developed in some areas of the school as in others. The quality of marking has improved throughout the school with pupils receiving valuable feedback as to how they might improve their work. In some classes the insights into pupils' learning gained through quality marking are not being used as effectively as they might to ensure a good match of work to enhance progress. Well organised and delivered intervention groups, reading support and Year 6 booster classes have been introduced to enhance performance and these appear to be accelerating pupils' progress.

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 – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school has had four headteachers since the previous inspection. In spite of this the school has done well to make improvements against all the areas identified for improvement. This has been possible due to focused senior leadership and a strong sense of teamwork that has at its heart a genuine desire to improve provision. Between the second and third monitoring inspection school leaders have become aware that there is a need to

support, develop and monitor the quality of teaching and learning further, particularly where pupils are not making sufficient progress. The current headteacher has been at the school for two weeks and appreciates that, although provision has improved since the inspection, steps to ensure consistently good provision are a priority. It is too early to evaluate the impact that the proposed initiatives are having on progress. The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues to improve. There is a good understanding of the strengths and areas requiring development. Existing resources are well deployed; effective links with parents and carers and a renewed focus on what constitutes good teaching and learning are now clearly evident. The collection and analysis of data, particularly on entry and the development of a more explicit literacy and numeracy environment are works in progress.

Middle leaders, particularly those with responsibility for English and mathematics are well equipped to support the drive to raise attainment. They are aware of what they should be doing to fulfil their role and are keen to do so. Unfortunately, up until now they have not had sufficient time to be sufficiently engaged in monitoring and developing teaching and learning through classroom support and the analysis of data. The link between senior leaders and those with subject responsibilities is not fully developed.

The IEB continues to monitor the work of the school. The Chair has a very good understanding of the emerging needs of the school and supports and holds school leaders to account extremely well.

Safeguarding policies and systems are in place and reviewed on a regular basis. The single central record meets requirements. Pupils report that they feel safe because pupils' behaviour has improved significantly.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels – satisfactory
- 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.