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27 May 2011

Mr David Saunders
Headteacher
Broom Valley Community School
Broom Valley Road
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S60 2QU

Dear Mr Saunders,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Broom Valley Community Primary School

Following my visit with Keith Bardon, additional inspector, to your school on 25 to 26 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 in November 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 – good

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying the letter and monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely,

John Rutherford
Her Majesty's Inspector

May 2011



Annex

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

■ Raise attainment and improve pupils' achievement by:

- ensuring that the work set provides greater challenge to pupils, particularly the more able children
- ensuring that lessons proceed at a pace that fully engages all pupils
- assessing pupils' work more accurately in order to match future teaching more closely to pupils' needs
- tracking pupils' progress more accurately throughout school so that targets set are both challenging and achievable.

■ Strengthening the effectiveness of leadership and management in driving school improvement by:

- an improved process of self-evaluation which provides a more accurate assessment of the quality of the school's outcomes and provision
- more rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching
- closer scrutiny by the governing body of the school's performance and provision so that it can ensure weaknesses are addressed.

Special measures: monitoring of Broom Valley Community Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 25 to 26 May 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and records of pupils' progress and analysed pupils' work. They met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, the vice-chairs of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and two representatives from the local authority.

Context

The school is going through a period of considerable instability in staffing due to some teachers resigning from their posts and others either beginning or returning from long periods of absence. It is anticipated that stability will be restored in September 2011 when the school will start the new year with all teachers holding a permanent contract for the first time during the period of special measures. This will mean, however, that half of the classes will be taught by teachers who are either new to the school or who are currently in post but taking on a new role.

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

Lesson observations, pupils' work and school records of pupils' progress indicate that the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress has increased markedly since the previous monitoring visit. This improvement is most noticeable in Key Stage 1 where the quality of teaching has improved significantly. There is also much less of a dip in pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 have continued to build on existing strengths and this is contributing to rising attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

Children's improving skills in speaking, writing and reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 are giving children a much stronger basis for their future learning. The improvements, however, are recent and have not had time to raise attainment at the end of Year 2. The better progress in writing results, to a considerable extent, from more use of interesting practical activities and discussion to motivate pupils. More effective teaching of letters and sounds contributes to the increased progress in reading, along with well-organised 'workshops' that help pupils to develop their enjoyment of books, as well as their word recognition and understanding. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is also improving in Key Stage 2 as new approaches are being introduced, for example, extending literacy skills in subjects other than English.

The many pupils who start mid-year who speak English as an additional language are improving their progress. This is because they receive effective language development

programmes from support staff while, at the same time, teachers are becoming more skilful in adapting lessons to help them do similar work to the other pupils. More-able pupils are making better progress because teachers and learning assistants are providing them with greater challenge in lessons. Any underachieving pupils are identified quickly and given carefully planned programmes of support to enable them to catch up without delay. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are achieving more because the coordinator keeps a close eye on their progress to ensure support for them is effective.

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

- raise attainment and improve achievement – good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to work make a strong contribution to their improving progress. There has been a marked improvement in their team-working skills as teachers have given them more opportunities to discuss new ideas with each other and to work in groups on problem-solving or research tasks. Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities and make a positive contribution to the school. A very good example is the large group of Year 6 'reading buddies' who help Year 2 pupils to develop their reading skills. Their training has given them a very good knowledge of how to help young children apply their phonic skills, and to look for other clues, when faced with a new word. They also know how to check pupils' understanding of the text they are reading. They keep records of the reading progress for the pupils to whom they are assigned, which include very helpful comments.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching and use of assessment have improved considerably since the previous monitoring inspection. There is much more good and outstanding teaching while the incidence of inadequate teaching has greatly reduced. Members of the leadership team are working hard to ensure that the current staffing instability is having the minimum possible negative effect on pupils' progress.

Where teaching is most effective, the pace of learning is improving with pupils more engaged in independent learning activities, rather than spending too much time sitting and listening. These activities are well planned to provide the right level of challenge for most groups. In some lessons, for example, teachers skilfully enabled all groups to make good progress towards the same mathematics objective, including more-able pupils, pupils at an early stage of learning English and those with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' increasingly effective partnership with learning assistants is central to them more successfully meeting the wide range of needs in their classes. The growing effectiveness of this partnership is also seen where learning assistants provide a separate lesson introduction for more-able pupils to ensure that their new work provides sufficient challenge. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2, learning assistants have significantly improved their contribution to pupils' progress, especially in the

way they use discussion and questions to extend pupils' speaking skills. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident and skilful in adjusting their lesson plans and changing the course of their lessons when they assess that some pupils need more support or challenge. A recently improved approach to target setting is helping pupils to be much clearer about where they need to concentrate their efforts so that they can raise their attainment.

Where teaching is not improving so quickly, the pace of activity is often too rapid and pupils are not given sufficient time to think of an answer, to complete a piece of work or to practise and consolidate new skills. This slows the pace of learning. Pupils also make slower progress in those lessons that do not have a sharp focus and in those where they have to manage too many different ideas at once. In some lessons, there are pupils judged to be middle ability who are not achieving as much as they can because they are not sufficiently stretched. Occasionally, a minority of pupils lose their concentration when they are not kept fully involved in practical activities. Marking is improving, but there is not a consistent approach to providing pupils with constructive feedback on their work and an opportunity to act on it.

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

- improve pace in lessons and the use of assessment information to support pupils' learning – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement are due to the much stronger contribution of the team of senior and middle leaders. The effective leadership of the headteacher is now well supported by the work of the deputy headteachers and middle leaders who were all appointed at the beginning of the school year. This leadership team has provided a good pace of improvement despite much time having to be spent dealing with staffing problems. Although they are making a positive difference to pupils' achievement, the capacity of the school as a whole to sustain the rate of improvement is not yet securely demonstrated because of the large number of staffing changes currently still to be completed.

The headteacher and senior leaders have robustly tackled persistently weak teaching and, wherever possible, they have helped teachers to improve their practice with well-tailored programmes of support. Together with the middle leaders, they have helped all staff to be more effective by identifying key priorities for improvement in teaching and learning and, then, following this up with appropriate guidance and training. Examples of recent improvements that have increased pupils' achievement include: improved links between Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1; better targets for pupils; more-effective partnership with learning assistants; sharper teaching of the technical aspects of writing; and giving guidance to parents and carers on how to support their children's reading development. This work is effective because senior leaders' well-planned and wide-ranging approach to monitoring teaching and learning gives them a very clear understanding of where they need to focus their efforts. As part of this monitoring, they have improved their

recording and analysis of information about pupils' progress. Leaders use this analysis with increasing effectiveness to check with teachers that every pupil is making as much progress as they can and, if not, work out what the barriers are and how these can be removed.

The governing body has significantly improved its contribution to evaluating the work of the school and to planning its future direction. The Chair of the Governing Body is now well supported by two vice-chairs who were appointed earlier in the school year. They have established an effective committee structure, which enables all members of the governing body to be more involved in gathering information about the work of the school. The governing body increasingly works with members of the school leadership team to discuss improvements to teaching and learning and to check that these are leading to improvements in pupils' progress. To increase the governing body's effectiveness in this work, it has received training on how to analyse the data on pupils' progress provided by school leaders and the School Improvement Partner. As members of the governing body are gaining a clearer understanding of the work of the school, they are becoming more confident in asking the sort of searching questions that help school leaders to improve their plans.

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

- improve monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision, particularly the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes – good
- closer scrutiny by the governing body of the school's performance – good

External support

Local authority officers and the School Improvement Partner continue to monitor the school's progress and they have a detailed understanding of its strengths and remaining areas for development. They provide appropriate support and challenge as required, however, recognising the leadership team's much greater independence in successfully tackling weaknesses, they have reduced their interventions considerably. They are aware that the school is entering a potentially difficult period due to the large number of staffing changes and they are on standby to provide additional support should they and school leaders judge it necessary to maintain the pace of improvement.