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17 June 2011

Mrs A Smith
Headteacher
Brewster Avenue Infant School
Brewster Avenue
Peterborough
PE2 9PN

Dear Mrs Smith

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Brewster Avenue Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 15 June 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

A newly qualified teacher (NQT) may be appointed subject to the following condition: The NQT must be mentored by a member of the senior leadership team.

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 Peterborough.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in (insert month and year)

- Ensure pupils are kept safe at all times by regularly checking that relevant policies, strategies and procedures are up to date.
- Raise the achievement of all pupils and especially the boys by:
 - improving the proportion reaching at least the levels expected for their age, particularly in writing
 - ensuring that pupils of average and higher ability reach the levels that they are capable of.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and curriculum planning by:
 - making full use of assessment information to set tasks that consistently challenge groups of different abilities
 - ensuring that the planning of lessons clearly identifies exactly what pupils are to learn in specific activities.
- Improve school self-evaluation procedures by:
 - making better use of the tracking of pupils' progress to identify exactly where improvement needs to be made
 - ensuring that the quality of planning, teaching and learning is regularly monitored and rigorously evaluated to identify areas for improvement
 - extending the role of the governing body in fulfilling the statutory duties placed upon them.

Special measures: monitoring of Brewster Avenue Infant School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 15 June 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, including those for safeguarding, and met with the headteacher, senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils.

Context

There have been no significant contextual changes since the last monitoring inspection.

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

Standards across the school are rising quickly for pupils of all abilities because pupils are making faster progress than before. More pupils of average and higher ability are reaching the levels of which they are capable. The most recent teacher assessments for Year 2 show that, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are broadly average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Standards in Year 1 remain low, especially in mathematics. Nevertheless, evidence in pupils' work and from lesson observations confirm that a greater proportion of pupils are reaching the levels expected for their age than at the time of the last monitoring inspection. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls in the school is closing because boys' progress is being closely monitored and, as a result, the curriculum has been modified. Boys are now engaged in their learning because teachers plan topics which really interest them. Standards in writing have improved because of carefully planned changes to the curriculum. These include, for example, more relevant opportunities for pupils to write from first-hand experience and well-focused additional interventions.

Pupils' progress across the school has improved, particularly in Year 2 and in the Nursery where a greater number are making good progress. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in other year groups, though the rate at which pupils make progress sometimes varies. For example, in Year 1, progress is quicker in writing than in mathematics. In response, leaders are supporting teachers to provide pupils with opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills through more practical and problem-solving activities. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills has particularly accelerated because of the well-taught system for learning the sounds that letters make and the regular individual attention given to developing each child's early reading skills.

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

- Raise the achievement of all pupils and especially the boys - good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last monitoring visit and is now good. This is due to the improvements to playtime arrangements, the greater consistency in the way teachers reward pupils' behaviour and apply sanctions, and the measures taken to ensure that the curriculum is more engaging. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They express particularly positive views about the new playground and associated activities, additional resources and arrangements. They also say that adults notice and respond to any concerns they may have and act upon them promptly. Attendance remains broadly average, though the number of pupils absent from school is falling steadily as is the number of pupils who arrive late.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has strengthened, as confirmed by evidence gathered through lesson observations and a review of pupils' work. While the majority of lessons seen during the monitoring inspection were satisfactory they contained a number of good elements. These include planning which more consistently details what pupils are expected to learn and the most important questions for adults to ask. Most teachers use their sound subject knowledge to plan activities to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and interests. Ongoing evaluations of planning show evidence that plans are usually modified as a result of the findings of teachers assessments. The quality of additional support and interventions provided by support staff has also improved and is contributing well to improved progress. Consequently, evidence from pupils' work shows that more pupils are making good progress than before. This is particularly the case in the Nursery and in Year 2, and in some aspects of the work in Reception. A few occasions remain, particularly in Year 1 in mathematics, when all pupils carry out the same activity which may be too easy for some and not challenging enough for others. Though some excellent practice was seen during the visit, the quality of written feedback given to pupils varies. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

In most classes, teachers use topic themes to make links between subjects on a daily basis so that boys and girls are equally excited about their learning. They are stimulated, for example, to write in more detail, depth and length across a range of genres and subjects. For example, in Year 2, pupils enthused by the books of Roald Dahl used their imagination to invent and write recipes for 'marvellous medicines'. Pupils in Year 1 took action photographs of each other at a multi-sports centre and used them as a stimulus for report and letter writing. As a result, standards in writing have improved. Plans are in place to improve further the presentation of pupils' work to show pupils' writing off to best effect and maximise potential to facilitate future learning.

Additional resources and the sharing of effective practice between Nursery and Reception classes have improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, the provision of additional resources in the outdoor areas has meant that children have been able to carry on their learning from inside to outside through activities linked through exciting topic themes.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and curriculum planning – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Suitable training and support from the local authority have strengthened the senior leaders' ability to lead improvements. The impact of this work can be seen in the improving rates of progress. Senior leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' performance across the school because their monitoring of the school's work has improved. They are making more effective use than before of the data and other information they collect. For example, where they have used data well, they have been particularly effective in identifying the performance of groups and targeting additional resources and support to make sure that potential weaknesses are addressed. However, leaders recognise the need to carry out checks with the same frequency in all year groups so that all potential weaknesses are addressed equally swiftly.

A timetable for a broad range of monitoring activities has been put in place though, occasionally, monitoring reports are focused more on the actions taken rather than on the impact of these actions on the quality of pupils' learning. The monitoring of teaching is resulting in a more detailed analysis of strengths and areas for development which are fed back to teachers, and checks are made to see if they have been acted upon. Action planning has been revisited and is now more focused on the school's most pressing priorities. In most cases, more detail has been given about what outcomes should look like for pupils when plans have been completed.

The governing body has continued its strong lead in improving and strengthening safeguarding. Further safety audits, including those for fire and health and safety, have been carried out. Appropriate action planning has been put in place and suitable actions taken as a result. The Chair of the Governing Body is implementing systems to ensure that once actions are identified they are all acted upon promptly. Statutory requirements for safeguarding continue to be met. The playground improvement has had a significant impact on pupils' safety and their enjoyment of school. Through the operations group, members of the governing body are keeping a close check on the progress made against the action plan.

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

- Improve school self-evaluation procedures – good
- Ensure pupils are kept safe at all times by regularly checking that relevant policies, strategies and procedures are up to date – good

External support

The local authority offers a suitable level of support and challenge. The school has particularly valued its support where it has contributed to the good impact on improvements to safeguarding, literacy and the moderation of pupils' work. Appropriate modifications have been made to the local authority's action plan.

Priorities for further improvement

The priorities remain those identified in the inspection of September 2010.