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Mrs Joanne Quigley
Headteacher
Wollescote Primary School
Drummond Lane
Lye
Stourbridge
DY9 8YA

Dear Mrs Quigley

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Wollescote Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15–16 June 2011 with David King, Additional Inspector, 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 March 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 – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Up to three newly qualified teachers may be appointed to any year group in the school.

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 Dudley.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is good or better and eliminate all inadequate teaching so that all pupils make good or better progress throughout both key stages, but particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring learning activities are precisely matched to the learning needs of individual pupils through regular assessment within lessons so that planning is adjusted to challenge all learners
 - raising teachers' expectations of the accelerated progress pupils can make
 - providing clear guidance to pupils, through careful marking and target setting, so that they know how to improve their work
 - ensuring that new strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are consistently implemented particularly in developing pupils' independent skills and active involvement in learning
 - maximising learning opportunities by engaging pupils in their learning through a more creative curriculum that ensures progression for pupils to develop their basic skills within relevant contexts
 - raising attendance to average to eliminate gaps in pupils' learning.

- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of leaders at all levels, particularly the roles of senior and middle managers, to increase the capacity of the school to improve
 - raising expectations by ensuring tracking and target-setting systems are used effectively and contain accurate information about what pupils know and can do
 - sharpening the school's improvement planning so that there are precise targets by which progress can be measured
 - establishing a professional development plan for all staff and building on the good practice of in-house coaching
 - developing the governing body's role in challenging and holding the school to account so that the school's performance improves.

Special measures: monitoring of Wollescote Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 15–16 June 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior staff, the school council, governors from the school improvement committee and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous visit in February a Year 5 teacher and two Year 6 teachers have resigned. A pupil school council has been formed. The school is going through staff restructuring. A phase leader, who is an advanced school teacher, has been appointed and took up post in May. A new phase leader for Key Stage 1 has been appointed to start in September. The current phase leader for Key Stage 1 will move to be the Year 5/6 phase leader in September.

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

The assessment of pupils' progress continues to be robust and data are very clearly presented so that the school and governing body can track progress. Since the previous visit data clearly identify a positive picture, with most year groups showing good improvement in the proportion of pupils on track to achieve at least expected levels of attainment. There are still areas where progress is a concern, especially in Year 5 where average attainment in all three classes is below what is expected.

The rates of progress made by pupils who have been in intervention groups have improved, and the gap between their attainment and what is expected for pupils of their age is closing. Based on the school's data, the predictions for this term's Year 6 tests show an increase in the proportion of pupils gaining the average level 4. If these predictions are correct, attainment will just rise above the floor target of 65%.

In the lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory progress. For some, satisfactory progress was not enough to ensure that they were working at levels of attainment expected for their age.

In the nursery and reception the children's skills, especially in terms of speaking and writing, are well below those expected for children of this age.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Attendance has risen dramatically and the latest figures show that it is now average. This improvement is a significant success story. Improvements have come about as

a result of a determined effort to eradicate unauthorised extended leave and persistent absence, and to reward and celebrate good attendance. The drive to improve attendance has the support of parents and carers. For example, the Urdu parents' group arranged for a message to be called during Friday prayers at the local mosque. The message encouraged parents and carers to ensure their children came to school every day as attendance was on the verge, at that time, of reaching the average benchmark.

Pupils' behaviour was often good in the lessons seen. They were more actively involved in their learning because teaching and the tasks given to children were often challenging and interesting. When teaching was satisfactory, some pupils found it difficult to stay focused but were always willing to follow instruction when given.

In the nursery and reception classes, children are responding well to a more structured day in which teachers and teaching assistants teach small groups. There were times, for example in the nursery, when children were not given enough guidance during a learning activity, and as a result they were not fully focused.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous visit in February. The proportion of good teaching has risen from just under a quarter, at the time of the last visit, to a half. No inadequate teaching was seen.

When teaching was good, teachers' expectations were appropriately high and lessons were well managed so that there was a sense of pace. Teachers' planning was detailed and highlighted the range of expectations and tasks to meet pupils' different abilities. During lessons teachers responded effectively to how well pupils were learning. For example, in one Year 3 English lesson the teacher stopped the class because she realised they needed more explanation to fully understand the task they had been given. In another lesson the teacher kept monitoring the work of pupils and challenged them when they were not achieving the learning objective.

In some lessons teaching, although satisfactory, missed opportunities to accelerate pupils' learning. In these lessons it was very evident that teachers have taken on board advice and training but do not always make the most of this by intuitively responding to how well pupils are learning.

Since the previous teaching assistants have been deployed to teach small groups of pupils who have been identified as needing to make accelerated progress. This is making much better use of the time and skills of teaching assistants. Some of the group work observed was well organised, but some teaching lacked the clarity needed to ensure pupils fully understood mathematical concepts. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have begun to monitor the impact of this work.

The school is now using the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), which is organised into cross-curricular topics. This has undoubtedly injected a huge amount of interest and fun into learning. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed IPC and how it makes lessons so much more enjoyable. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils have visited the seaside and now have five tons of sand in the playground to bring the experience of a beach back to the school. Pupils were seen really enjoying the experience of this temporary beach, which generated good learning opportunities. The introduction of IPC has created a real sense of enthusiasm in pupils and staff but as yet there has been no real evaluation of the impact on teaching and learning.

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

- ensure the quality of teaching is good or better and eliminate all inadequate teaching so that all pupils make good or better progress throughout both key stages, but particularly in Key Stage 2 – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Improvement work continues to be led very effectively by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher. School improvement planning is sharply focused on what needs to be done, and informed by rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

The systems used to track pupils' progress are rigorous and increasingly more accurate, giving the school a useful tool to direct further work. Data have been used well to identify a group of White British boys who have been underperforming. Early signs show that the resulting intervention programmes for these boys are leading to improvements in the progress they are making.

The phase leader role continues to develop. Since the previous visit phase meetings (a phase is two year groups, for example Years 3 and 4) have been running on alternative weeks. These phase meetings, led by phase leaders, have been a good opportunity to identify specific issues. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the phase leader has had good support from the local authority which has led to good improvements in the learning environment and the way teaching is organised. The impact of the phase leader role is growing. For example, the phase leader for Years 3 and 4 is effectively supporting colleagues through role modelling good planning. The remaining examples of satisfactory teaching and learning observed indicate that the full impact is yet to be seen.

The effectiveness of in-house coaching, where teachers receive bespoke support and challenge, has led to real improvements in the quality of teaching. Aspects of this work are innovative. For example, senior leaders, with the agreement of staff, observe lessons and at times intervene to offer advice and direction so that the

teacher has the opportunity to change what they are doing. This approach is explained to pupils so that they know what is happening and benefit from the 'live' improvements to teaching. This professional willingness on the part of staff to engage in interventional coaching has paid off. Senior leaders know that good teaching is still not sustained or embedded. For example, the school's monitoring of teaching and learning, supported by the findings of pupil assessments, shows that some of the teaching in Year 5 is still ineffective.

The governing body continues to receive data, monitoring reports and evaluations of the school's work. The school improvement committee, the group of governors who meet with senior staff and representatives of the local authority monthly, are confident that the school is addressing pupils' underperformance.

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

- strengthen the quality of leadership and management – good.

External support

The local authority has provided good support. Support for the work in Early Years has been well received and has led to improvement. Other support, through consultants and advanced skills teachers, has complemented the work of senior leaders. While the local authority plans to continue providing support for the school, it recognises the growing capacity of the senior leadership team.

Priorities for further improvement

- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the International Primary Curriculum on the quality of teaching and learning.