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17 June 2011

Miss Nicki Ellwand
Acting headteacher
Pontefract the Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School
Carleton Road
Carleton
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF8 3NP

Dear Miss Ellwand,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Pontefract the Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 15 and 16 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 fourth 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 – 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Godman
Additional Inspector

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

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

- Raise achievement and standards in all subjects by:
 - ensuring all lessons lead to good or better progress for all pupils
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning in lessons
 - making lessons more challenging, particularly for pupils of middle and high ability
 - improving the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to develop their literacy skills, including speaking and listening, across all subjects.

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment by:
 - ensuring lessons are engaging and well matched to the needs of all pupils
 - identifying more opportunities to assess pupils in lessons
 - sharpening the quality of advice and guidance given to pupils so they are left in no doubt how they should improve their work
 - improving the accuracy, consistency and quality of marking across the school.

- Ensure leaders and managers drive improvements by:
 - ensuring monitoring and evaluation systems are accurate in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - ensuring that the school development plans are precise in addressing improvements
 - establishing consistency of practice across all classrooms, so that good and outstanding practice is shared
 - enabling staff to understand assessment data and use it effectively in the classroom to plan work which challenges all pupils
 - giving the governing body more accurate information about the school so that they are in a better position to hold it to account for its effectiveness.

Special measures: monitoring of Pontefract the Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 15 and 16 June 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the acting headteacher and the headteacher designate. She also met with groups of pupils, two representatives of the local authority and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the Year 2 teacher has given her notice and is currently not in school. This class is taught by a temporary teacher. The Year 4 teacher has begun a phased return to work following long-term absence. A new headteacher has been appointed and will join the school from September 2011.

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

Improvements to pupils' learning have continued in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1. In these classes, teachers plan activities which increasingly encourage independence and investigation. For example, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage experimented with building boats for the Gingerbread Man to cross the river. Year 1 pupils gained writing skills by developing their visual and tactile story plans. In these classes, pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, are engaged more and make better progress because the approaches used meet their needs more effectively.

The progress of pupils in Year 6 is also accelerating. This is most marked in reading, because the text selected for the class has captured these pupils' interest and is helping them to make links with their work in history. In Year 3, the teacher is using assessment more effectively to adjust activities from lesson to lesson. Consequently, pupils' progress in English is increasing. In the other classes there is less evidence of accelerating progress.

The progress of some more-able pupils continues to be slower. These pupils recognise that they do not always work as hard as they could because, at times, they are insufficiently challenged.

School data give a mixed picture of pupils' progress. For example, progress in reading is better in Year 3 and Year 6, but in mathematics it is better in Year 2. Data also indicate that progress in Years 4 and 5, particularly that of boys, is not improving as rapidly. Pupils' writing, other than for the youngest pupils, remains a weakness. Although the progress of Year 6 pupils has accelerated this year, there has been too much ground to make up in a

year. As a result, the early indications are that they will not meet their targets, particularly in writing.

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

- raise achievement and standards in all subjects – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving as routines become more established and teachers have higher expectations of pupils' responses. Behaviour at lunchtime has improved as a result of more opportunities for pupils to engage in a variety of activities supported by the lunchtime staff. Pupils in Year 6 have stronger reading and social skills, ensuring better preparation for secondary school. Pupils are increasingly eager to take on new responsibilities, for example, collecting materials for recycling.

Effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is improving steadily and variations arise mainly because teachers who have joined or returned this term settle in and get to know the pupils in the classes they teach. In general, pupils have better access to information and communication technology and to resources for independent practical work. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' learning have increased and marking is much more consistent. However, some pupils remain unclear as to the next steps they should take to increase their learning and to reach a higher level.

Teachers have a better grasp of assessment and some previous inaccuracies are being addressed. The analysis by class teachers of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is identifying weaknesses and the next steps more clearly. However, there remains some variation in how effectively this is followed up in order to check whether subsequent actions have improved learning and overcome weaknesses. The stronger contribution of support staff is helping those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to play a fuller part in class lessons.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and assessment – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The National Leader in Education and her colleagues from the National Support School have been instrumental in promoting the staff's greater ambition for the school to succeed. Staff are increasingly eager to demonstrate improvement and to learn how to increase their effectiveness further. In partnership with the acting headteacher, the National Support School staff have played a central role in securing the developments in the quality of teaching. Instability in staffing mainly accounts for the lack of accelerated improvement since the last monitoring inspection.

As monitoring of the school's work becomes increasingly searching, further areas in need of attention have been identified. For example, with help from members of the Interim Executive Board, assessments are more accurate. Staff have increased their understanding of effective assessment, although insecure assessments in the past still make it difficult for the school to gain a clear picture of progress over time. There is closer monitoring of the school's progress against its development plans. This indicates secure progress in implementing changes to teaching mathematics and to ensuring that the features of effective lessons are in place in each class. However, it also shows slower improvement in the teaching of literacy skills.

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

- ensure leaders and managers drive improvements – satisfactory

External support

External support from the National Support School and the School Improvement Adviser has helped secure the improvements to date. It is currently uncertain as to whether this support will continue next term. However, if it is removed at this stage, there is a risk that the break in continuity of personnel could jeopardise the necessary pace of improvement, as well as making a smooth transition for the new headteacher more difficult.