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17 June 2011

Mrs Christine Lacey
Headteacher
Hallgate Primary School Cottingham
Hallgate
Cottingham
HU16 4DD

Dear Mrs Lacey,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hallgate Primary School Cottingham

Following my visit with Lynne Davies, additional inspector, 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 December 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

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 the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Raise standards and improve the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning to make it at least consistently good in all classes
 - ensuring that pupils are given the guidance they need to improve their work
 - using assessment information to match work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities
 - developing a more creative curriculum, which matches pupils' needs and interests
 - challenging the more-able pupils to ensure that they achieve their potential.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all groups of pupils are meeting challenging targets
 - identifying a manageable number of key priorities and producing detailed action plans to bring about improvement
 - making the best use of available time and resources so that pupils stay motivated and engaged throughout the lesson.
- Improve the school's governance by:
 - developing the role of the governing body in monitoring, evaluating and driving the school's improvement
 - ensuring the governing body holds teachers to account for the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that policies meet statutory requirements and are kept up to date.
- Improve outcomes and the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that indoor and outdoor activities are challenging and purposeful and clearly linked to all areas of learning
 - using day-to-day assessment more effectively to inform the next steps in learning for individual children
 - providing better opportunities for developing children's creative skills.

Special measures: monitoring of Hallgate Primary School Cottingham

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

Evidence

The inspectors observed teaching and learning in each of the ten classes in the school. They scrutinised school documents and reports. Discussions took place with staff, pupils, three members of the governing body and a local authority representative.

Context

The school continues to experience disruption in staffing. The long-term absences now include the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. A Year 5 class teacher has also left the school. However, the Key Stage 1 leader has returned to work.

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

Scrutiny of the school's latest assessment data reveals that pupils' progress is improving and their overall attainment is rising, albeit inconsistently across year groups, subjects and phases of learning. Nevertheless, more ground has been gained than was the case at the third monitoring inspection. Within this headline, progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 has been faster. At Key Stage 2 the picture is variable. In Year 6 and Year 4 progress has improved rapidly in mathematics and reading for most groups. Despite recent improvements, pupils' overall progress in Year 5 remains slow and their current achievement is low. The same is true for Year 3 pupils, although they have made better progress in mathematics. Writing is the weakest aspect across all year groups. The relative progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and more-able pupils has improved since the third monitoring inspection across all subjects, with a significant improvement in the number of Year 2 pupils gaining a Level 3. The school knows that the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals continues to be a concern.

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

- raise standards and improve the rate of pupil's progress - satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

Scrutiny of teaching and learning throughout the school revealed a higher proportion of good lessons than at the time of the third monitoring inspection. No inadequate lessons were observed. This is encouraging and symptomatic of the increasing impact of the improvement strategies introduced. There is evidence that more staff are adhering to the agreed protocols for lesson planning and delivery and for target-setting and assessment. Pupils say they have an improved understanding of what is expected of them and what they

need to do to improve, aided by individual target sheets, regular staff feedback and evaluative marking. Staff are also making better use of the data they generate to inform their planning. Staff are increasingly offering pupils a stimulating, diverse and challenging learning experience which they enjoy and which is allowing them to regain some of their previously lost ground. Some inconsistency remains where the aforementioned is not consistently evident. The deployment and effectiveness of teaching assistants continues to improve.

Pupils believe the curriculum is more interesting, relevant and integrated than ever before. They enjoy exploring the range of themes offered, including the recent focus on 'our village' and the local coastline. They are also enthused by the increased number of visits, visitors and extra-curricular opportunities they are experiencing. Recently, this has included working with a local artist to create a mural, the Year 1 and Year 2 visit to Log lands wildlife area, and sporting events like the 'Hot Shots' athletics. The new approaches to learning involving more practical exercises, problem-solving challenges, creative writing opportunities and learning through drama activities are becoming more embedded. Among other things, inspectors saw pupils using each other to create a series of 'living' Venn diagrams, exploring food chains and feeding relationships, and presenting a persuasive argument.

The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues to improve. The indoor and outdoor environments afford children a wealth of opportunities for independent, guided and more formal learning, and to develop their creative skills. Children's progress is carefully monitored and skilfully accelerated. Assessment is thorough, regular and clearly indicates the next steps individual children should take. Happy, confident children are benefitting enormously from the more challenging and supportive setting created by the well-motivated and increasingly effective Early Years Foundation Stage team. This is underpinned by the skilful direction of the seconded Early Years Foundation Stage leader.

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

- improve the outcomes and the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage - good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

In the face of on-going issues in staffing the school's senior leaders continue to work strategically, doggedly and with purpose to tackle the key issues afflicting the school. In all aspects they have gained some ground. However, the inconsistency in pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 and the quality of writing in particular are major concerns. The headteacher and her deputy have complementary skills and are working relentlessly to monitor and evaluate the impact of actions taken, and then to refine and/or set fresh parameters for success. The 'no hiding place' culture is understood and staff are regularly and robustly held to account for the effectiveness of their work. This has included lesson observations, work scrutiny and interrogation of pupil data. The focus on sustaining pupil motivation and engagement is paying dividends. The long-term absences of the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators are blunting some of the sharpness of the school's work. Nevertheless, the



impact of senior leaders is growing as their developments become more embedded and bear more fruit. Leaders know that there is substantial work to do if the school is to be removed from special measures at the next monitoring inspection.

Governors are realistic and perceptive. Work to increase their sphere of influence is gaining momentum and the monitoring and evaluation systems they have introduced are more embedded. Their contribution to driving school improvement is more apparent and more incisive. They are holding senior and middle leaders to account by requiring them to present regular updates on progress which they question and challenge robustly. They exhibit an improved understanding of the full extent of their remit. They are better equipped to challenge the information they are given because of on-going training and the cumulative expertise and experience they now have between them. Governors have started to work proactively by funding a short story competition to support the school's focus on writing, exploring how the school can engage parents more effectively, and reviewing the 'excellence in schools' report to see how the successful strategies highlighted might apply in this school's context.

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

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels - satisfactory
- improve the school's governance - satisfactory

External support

The local authority is providing substantial, wide-ranging support, which the school has found invaluable. This has included extensive input from the literacy and mathematics consultants, training for governors, and the secondment of a teacher to support teaching and learning in Year 5. It has also involved data management support for senior leaders and work to further embed a more creative approach to curriculum delivery throughout the school. The link officer continues to hold weekly review meetings with the headteacher.