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14 July 2011

Mrs D Liversidge
Headteacher
Earby Springfield Primary School
Bailey Street
Earby
Barnoldswick
Lancashire
BB18 6SJ

Dear Mrs Liversidge,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Earby Springfield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 and 13 July 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 March 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 - satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - good

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

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 Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Sonya Williamson
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

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

- Raise attainment to the national average by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations of pupils' abilities and that the targets for which pupils strive reflect this
 - planning and delivering lessons and activities which take into account the full range of pupils' needs, interests and abilities
 - developing teaching strategies that promote good achievement
 - developing effective strategies to identify and support pupils quickly if they begin to underachieve
 - developing the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so it better reflects the full range of children's needs and interests.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels have greater impact on the school's effectiveness by:
 - ensuring that the governing body understands and fulfils all statutory responsibilities, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils' well-being and equalities
 - prioritising actions for school improvement and agreeing measurable success criteria
 - increasing the rigour of the systems that monitor and evaluate the impact of actions on provision and outcomes
 - making expectations clear and accountability rigorous
 - nurturing the potential of senior and middle leaders through well-targeted professional development
 - increasing the rigour with which the governing body holds the school to account for its performance.
- Strengthen other areas of provision by:
 - reversing the downward trend in attendance through carefully targeted intervention involving pupils and their parents
 - developing a clear communication and engagement strategy with parents and carers so they develop confidence in the work of the school
 - setting clear guidelines for all staff regarding safeguarding and the reporting of incidents.

Special measures: monitoring of Earby Springfield Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 12 and 13 July 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' work and met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject coordinators and other staff. Meetings were also held with a group of pupils, four members of the governing body, a group of parents and carers and two representatives from the local authority. The inspector also met with another large group of parents and carers who wished to speak to the inspector about a range of concerns and queries.

Context

There have been further staffing changes since the last monitoring inspection. One of the assistant headteachers and one temporary teacher have left the school. One teacher remains on maternity leave. These posts are being covered by temporary staff and also by consultants from the local authority. A new teacher is currently being recruited to the Reception class for next term. From September there will be a mixed Year 3 and 4 class.

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

The progress that pupils make and the quality of their learning have both improved since the last monitoring visit. Consequently, they now achieve better and the attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations and exceeds them in some respects. Unvalidated results from national tests taken by pupils in the summer term show that pupils have attained particularly good results in writing and that the proportion of pupils making expected rates of progress between Key Stage 1 and 2 has risen. An increasing proportion of pupils have attained the higher Level 5 in national tests, especially in mathematics. These improvements in attainment and progress have been achieved as a result of better teaching, more accurate and well used assessment and more precisely chosen and effective interventions for pupils who were not progressing as rapidly as expected. Although there are no consistent patterns of differences in the attainment of different groups of pupils, variation persists between different classes and subjects. Pupils are making more rapid progress where attainment has been low, for example in Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Writing remains the weakest aspect overall. Pupils attain high standards in their art work. They enjoy it and are proud of their achievements. Displays of pupils' best work in all subject areas greatly enhance the quality of the learning environment.

In the lessons observed, pupils made rapid progress where their learning built on previous understanding and knowledge and where there was a strong focus on promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills to underpin development of their writing. Pupils benefitted from

the use of drama, collaborative working in pairs and from opportunities to promote their independent learning, such as being able to mark their own work or that of others.

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

- raise attainment to the national average - good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils continue to behave well. When asked, they express clearly their ideas for making school better, for example, they suggest improving behaviour further at lunchtimes through more opportunities for specific games. Pupils say they would like to contribute more to the school community. The school council have worked with staff to run the book day and this is helping to encourage pupils' pleasure in reading. Pupils show care for each other and are proud of each other too. One pupil took great delight in ensuring that the inspector saw the beautiful rain stick that another pupil had produced as part of a topic involving art, music and technology. The school has met its target for pupil attendance. However, rates are not showing significant improvement despite the school's close monitoring of attendance, the use of appropriate rewards and collaborative work with other schools.

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

- reverse the downward trend in attendance – satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is improving well. Teaching observed was mostly good and none was inadequate. The better teaching is increasingly characterised by more varied teaching and learning approaches; higher levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities; raised expectations of what pupils can do, especially in literacy, numeracy and science; and improved match of tasks to pupils' individual learning needs. When groups of pupils have to work on different tasks without direct input from the teacher, they do so with increasing confidence and develop their independent and collaborative learning skills well. Teachers' questioning techniques are developing. Most use open questions that are increasingly targeted at individual pupils to move their learning on or to check their understanding. However, the quality of questioning varies between classes and too few teachers deeply probe pupils' understanding or insist that pupils explain their responses fully. Targets set for pupils ensure they know the level at which they are working and signify the next steps needed but they are not yet consistently and effectively used by all staff. Teachers ensure pupils know the purpose of lessons but do not share specific learning objectives with different groups of pupils. Almost all teachers make good use of information and communication technology for teaching but its use for learning is more limited other than for research or presentation in the foundation subjects. Pupils greatly enjoy their work in the foundation subjects and appreciate the linking of subjects into lively topics with more active teaching and learning strategies. Teachers do not yet ensure that pupils apply their numeracy and literacy skills to their work in these topics but have recognised the need to create more opportunities for

pupils to write at length for different purposes as part of their topics. Wall displays show the strong impact of the start made with this work.

The use of consistent systems means that teachers are increasingly adept at accurately identifying what pupils know, understand and can do and what their next steps need to be. They record this information so that pupil progress can be closely tracked at individual and group level. This close monitoring of data has led to more effective interventions, both through in-class support and through withdrawal. Teaching assistants are clearer about their roles and all the staff understand their responsibilities for ensuring good pupil progress. Teachers' awareness of the next steps in learning is reflected in the improved quality of marking. The best marking celebrates what pupils have done well and suggests what would make their work better but staff do not routinely give pupils time to reflect on or respond to their marking comments.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage provision has been enhanced so that there is increased focus on all the different areas of learning and improved opportunities for assessment. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively with groups of pupils with just the right amount of intervention and direction of tasks. Children's progress is accelerating but on-going changes to staffing mean that it is too soon to see the full impact of these developments.

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

- improve the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations of pupils and ensuring teaching is better matched to pupils' needs, interests and abilities – good
- develop strategies to identify and support pupils who fall behind – good
- develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Improved leadership and management at all levels has contributed to the more rapid rate of improvement since the last monitoring visit. An increased range of well-focused monitoring activities, used with greater frequency and involving more staff give the school a much more accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Rigorous lesson observations undertaken by the headteacher provide a good model for other leaders to follow. This means that the confidence of the key subject and aspect coordinators is growing so that they can undertake more effective pupil work scrutiny and checks on teachers' planning. They are now beginning to undertake lesson observations and are able to identify the best aspects of practice and what developments in practice would lead to better rates of progress for pupils. There is much greater capacity to share best practice and, because almost all staff are involved, there is greater corporate responsibility for making things better.

Outcomes from monitoring are evaluated realistically, shared in a range of meetings and used to inform plans for improvement. Evaluations are more focused on the impact of provision on outcomes for pupils but this is not always fully evident in written reports to

staff and there are lost opportunities to exemplify changes that have the best impact. There are good examples in mathematics. Improvement planning reflects the school's growing clarity of vision about the next steps needed but staff are not yet confident enough to use assessment data to help them to set more precise measurable targets for pupils' attainment and progress.

Leaders and other teachers know what is expected of them and how they will be held to account for the progress of pupils across the school. However, accountability over time is not yet sufficiently linked to the full range of monitoring and evaluation evidence. The use of individual action plans to improve the quality of teaching, peer coaching, the sharing of good practice and links with other schools are all strengthening leadership and management and teaching skills. The effective balance between in-house and externally provided professional development has enabled staff to recognise their strengths as well as their areas for development. Experienced senior staff are modelling well the strategies that those staff with less experience of leadership and management need to develop.

Governors too have improved the rigour of their work. They have held the headteacher to account through a balance of challenge and appropriate support. Their work is more pertinently focused through the use of incisive questioning and visits to the school. This means they gain more precise information about the impact of the school's work on outcomes for pupils. The actions governors take are underpinned by thorough debate using the full range of their expertise. Difficult decisions about staffing and class groupings have been very carefully considered. They have continued to develop safeguarding through further improvements to fencing and there are strong procedures for the recruitment of new staff.

There is scope for governors to work with the school to develop the partnership with parents and carers. Parents and carers have a range of views about the school, both positive and negative. The school has continued its efforts to involve parents and carers through questionnaires, newsletters and themed events. The majority of parents and carers have not responded to the school's requests for their involvement although one is now having input to discussions about the nature of future reports and more are responding to questionnaires. Parents and carers expressed concern about communication with them about staffing instability. It has not always been possible for more information to be provided due to the personal and private nature of employment issues. The school is already aware of other aspects of parents' and carers' concern and is developing plans to address them.

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

- ensure the governing body fulfils its responsibilities and rigorously holds the school to account – good
- improve systems for and the impact of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning – good

- improve the impact of senior and middle leadership through clarifying expectations, targeting professional development and ensuring accountability – good
- strengthen safeguarding procedures – satisfactory
- improve partnerships with parents and carers – satisfactory

External support

The local authority and School Improvement Partner have supported the school well since the last monitoring inspection. They have provided significant support for staffing changes and significant challenge to accelerate the pace of change. The use of consultants and advisers has been judicious and has resulted in a strengthening of leadership and management at all levels.