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15 July 2011

Mr G Thomas
The Interim Headteacher
Iqra Slough Islamic Primary School
Wexham Road
Slough
SL2 5JW

Dear Mr Thomas

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Iqra Slough Islamic Primary School

Following my visit with Atifa Sayani, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

The school is able to appoint two newly qualified teachers to any year group except in the upcoming Year 4.

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 and the Association of Muslim Schools.

Yours sincerely

Susan Gadd
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- By September 2011, raise pupils' attainment and achievement in English, mathematics and science to nationally expected levels in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - improving teaching so that it is consistently good or better and promotes better progress in learning
 - using assessment information to ensure higher expectations in lessons and good challenge for all pupils in their learning
 - using assessment information and better marking to ensure that all pupils are aware of how they can improve.
- Improve leadership and management by developing sharper and more rigorous monitoring to evaluate the quality of learning.
- By June 2011, put in place effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance so that it is at least average compared to all primary schools.
- By June 2011, improve the curriculum in Key Stage 2 by ensuring adequate opportunities are provided for all pupils to develop the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Special measures: monitoring of Iqra Slough Islamic Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 July 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited 16 lessons, scrutinised documents and pupils' work. They also met with the interim headteacher, other staff including members of the senior and middle management team, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.

Context

Since the last visit the school has undergone significant staff changes. The contract of the interim headteacher has been extended to July 2012. The education consultant has been appointed as the associate headteacher until July 2012. Two substantive assistant headteachers have been appointed, along with a temporary special needs coordinator. Five teachers have resigned and these classes are currently being covered by supply teachers. A staffing restructure of teaching assistants has resulted in 22 members of staff losing their posts along with all lunch time controllers. Lunch time is now supervised by teaching assistants and members of the senior leadership team. The governing body has undergone a skills analysis which has resulted in a reduction to the number of governors. The school is currently considering academy status for the future.

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

Key findings since the last monitoring visit

- Children in Early Years Foundation Stage continue to make accelerated progress in lessons. However, the school is aware that in the past assessments made at the beginning of Reception have not always been reflective of children's actual starting points. Current end of Reception assessments more accurately reflect pupils' achievements. The school has plans in place to ensure that future assessments at the beginning of Reception are accurate.
- In Key Stage 1, lesson observations and school data indicate that progress in lessons continues to improve. It is particularly strong in Year 1 where many pupils make accelerated progress especially in writing. The current attainment in Year 2 is on track to improve and many more pupils are likely to achieve the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 2, lesson observations show that many pupils are beginning to make rapid progress. This improved rate of progress in lessons is now reflected in the school's own data. However, the rate of progress between subjects is still variable between year groups, with some pupils still making slow progress. Lesson observations indicate that progress in science remains variable with some signs of improvements in particular classes. The school is aware that

further work is required to accelerate progress consistently in reading, particularly in Key Stage 2. To date a significant amount of money has been invested in new reading books and training has begun to develop staff expertise in the teaching of reading.

- The unvalidated examination results at the end of Year 6 in 2011 indicate that attainment is improving. In mathematics it is likely to rise to broadly average for the first time in two years. In writing, a significant number of pupils are likely to achieve the higher levels, although attainment in English overall is likely to remain low.

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

- by September 2011, raise pupils' attainment and achievement in English, mathematics and science to nationally expected levels in Years 3 to 6 – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Below are the key findings since the last monitoring visit.

- Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the changes at lunch time. They particularly like the increased opportunities to play a variety of games as a result of new play equipment and the introduction of a games coach.
- Behaviour has continued to improve as a result of increased incentives to behave well, with a more consistent approach to implementing the behaviour policy. The school is aware that this improvement now needs to be fully embedded.
- Attendance is steadily rising. Parents, carers and pupils are becoming more aware of the importance of regular attendance. Positive incentives to encourage attendance have been further developed through the introduction of an attendance cup, stickers and regular first day calling. Newsletters now make reference to attendance and penalty notices are being issued more regularly to discourage persistence absenteeism. As a result of these changes, there is a clear trend of improvement.

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

- by June 2011, put in place effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance so that it is at least average compared to all primary schools – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

Below are the key findings since the last monitoring visit

- The quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve across the school. Many lessons observed were good and some outstanding, particularly those conducted by permanent members of staff. The learning environment has improved significantly. Classrooms are welcoming and pupils' work is celebrated through a range of displays. Lesson plans are consistent in format

and detailed with tasks more closely linked to the needs of individuals and National Curriculum expectations.

- In the best lessons pupils are learning consistently well throughout the different parts of the lesson as a result of challenging questions, opportunities to develop and rehearse specialised vocabulary, and, through the effective use of the interactive whiteboard. This, along with opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and engage in group discussions, ensures that pupils are eager and keen to learn. Consequently, pupils make rapid progress. As one child stated, 'I have learnt so much this year it is amazing. I have moved from a level 2a to a level 4!' On the whole, teaching assistants are used well throughout the lesson and marking is detailed and refers to the next steps to learning. This remains particularly strong in literacy with the introduction of highlighting pupils' strengths and areas for development. There are some signs of improvement in mathematics and science, but more work is required to embed this good practice across the school. On rare occasions teachers spend too much time talking and consequently the pace of learning is too slow.
- Staff confidence in assessing pupils' progress and achievement has improved as a result of additional staff training, whole school moderation and external support. The school now has a baseline for assessing science across the school and assessments in mathematics and literacy are regularly reviewed. Consequently, the impact of whole school initiatives is becoming more measurable and is evident in the accelerated progress made by many pupils.
- The curriculum has been developed through the introduction of the International Primary Curriculum. Where possible this provides pupils with opportunities to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and science within the wider context of a topic. In addition, pupils receive discrete lessons in these areas. Pupils now have the opportunities to develop their writing skills through extended writing time. Pupils in Year 6 have recently had an opportunity to apply their information and communication technology through the development of a new school website. The school is now considering how best to extend pupils' application of skills in this subject through the new curriculum. School day trips are now focused on enriching the new topics being introduced across the school.

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

- by June 2011, improve the curriculum in Key Stage 2 by ensuring adequate opportunities are provided for all pupils to develop the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Below are the key findings since the last monitoring visit

- The interim headteacher continues to provide very strong leadership based on a clear vision and understanding of the next steps required to maintain this good progress. Together with the new senior leadership team, he has been highly effective in improving pupils' outcomes and developing a consistent

approach to assessment across the school. Since March 2011 over 70 lesson observations have taken place involving leaders at various levels. Consequently, there is a clear trend of improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. However, progress for some pupils, such as in Year 3, has been slower.

- A new tracking document has been introduced, providing the school with a detailed overview of the progress that individual pupils make. This has proved to be a valuable tool in supporting the school to evaluate the progress of pupils in different year groups, classes and subjects. Improvements to pupil progress meetings have resulted in greater accountability amongst staff and appropriate intervention strategies being identified. The new leaders are at various stages of developing their leadership. Some are beginning to lead whole school initiatives. They have been involved in a range of monitoring activities and are able to evaluate the impact of some of the changes. For example, changes to planning in mathematics have helped to ensure that expectations have risen and pupils are now receiving work more tailored to their needs and more closely linked to National Curriculum levels.
- The challenge to the school now lies in ensuring that the pupils continue to make accelerated progress whilst inducting several new members of staff in September.
- Members of the governing body continue to develop their expertise through auditing their own strengths and in being allotted responsibilities accordingly. Attendance at additional training in areas such as developing accountability and understanding school data has strengthened their ability to hold the school to account. Governors regularly review the work of the school through a variety of monitoring activities. More recently link governors have written reports closely associated to the key areas of improvements and these are now beginning to lead future actions. Consequently, the governing body maintains a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and is actively involved in moving the school forward.

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

- improve leadership and management by developing sharper and more rigorous monitoring to evaluate the quality of learning – good.

External support

The support from the local authority has been good. The key contact person allocated to the school has had regular meetings with the interim headteacher and has been highly effective in brokering the support required by the school. This has had a positive impact on pupil attendance, outcomes, teaching and learning, whole school assessments and the development of teachers' subject knowledge in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the local authority has provided extensive support and advice to the school during the reduction of teaching assistant posts.