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29 September 2011

Mr Fullwood
Acting Headteacher
William Booth Primary and Nursery School
Notintone Street
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Nottingham
NG2 4QF

Dear Mr Fullwood

Special measures: monitoring inspection of William Booth Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 September 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 1 December 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 – satisfactory.

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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham City.

Yours sincerely

Ceri Morgan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and improve progress in reading and writing throughout the school by:
 - enabling most pupils to achieve at least one full National Curriculum level of progress in reading and writing every two years, from their starting points at the beginning of Year 1 to the end of Year 6
 - ensuring that at least an hour in every school day is spent developing reading and writing through exciting and motivating curriculum themes
 - ensuring that writing and reading skills are systematically taught at an appropriate level in Reception and throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.

- Improve attendance by:
 - focusing on, and making sure that, parents and carers of pupils who are persistently absent fully understand both their statutory responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and the range of consequences if they do not
 - introducing positive incentives for children to attend school.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing a climate where excellence in academic achievement is highly valued and accurately measured
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching is judged by its impact on pupils' learning and academic progress.

Special measures: monitoring of William Booth Primary and Nursery School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 27 and 28 September 2011

Evidence

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised key school documents (including the school improvement plan and minutes from a range of meetings) and met with the acting headteacher, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, senior leaders and managers in school and a group of pupils. Every class and seven teachers were observed, and a sample of pupils' literacy and numeracy workbooks was examined. The inspector also heard a small sample of four pupils reading, and met with a representative from the local authority.

Context

The school continues to go through significant change. An acting headteacher took up post only a few days before the inspection, for the duration of the absence of the substantive headteacher. A new timetable was implemented in September 2011 and the Interim Executive Board, very recently established at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, is now fully into its work. Pupil numbers and staffing levels remain stable.

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

Pupils' achievement remains inadequate but is now improving. Attainment remains low, especially in the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Although improvement is evident in the progress being made by many pupils, some inconsistencies are now emerging. For example, the rate of improvement is more rapid in Key stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Girls perform better than boys in reading and even more so in their writing. In some classes almost half of the pupils are making steady progress rather than more rapid improvement. The school does not yet fully monitor the relative performance of pupils from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds against national averages, but does compare it with previous expectations in school. The data show that progress for these groups is also improving, but their attainment is still a long way short of average levels. A significant improvement is the way both teachers and pupils use precise vocabulary in explanations. This is improving pupils' ability to explain their thinking.

Despite these variations, pupils are now showing a greater understanding of sentence construction, grammatical structures and key concepts. Spelling is generally weak and the presentation of work remains scruffy despite the welcome introduction of handwriting practice books. In mathematics pupils show a

satisfactory grasp of vocabulary and shape, but a fragile understanding of place value and number means many find solving problems difficult. Although not specified in the original inspection, attainment and progress in mathematics are inadequate and resolving this is a key priority for the school.

Pupils show an enthusiasm for reading and enjoy real books. They are given a wide choice to select from and most do so appropriately, although some pupils still attempt to read books which are either too easy or too difficult. Reading standards are improving throughout the school. Younger pupils show an improved ability to 'sound out' words they do not recognise, while older pupils can recall stories, predict outcomes and discuss characterisation in detail. However, many pupils still lack fluency and even the strongest do not read with expression or full comprehension.

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

- raise attainment and improve progress in reading and writing throughout the school – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The behaviour of most pupils is satisfactory, although a small but significant number with very particular needs struggle to sustain good behaviour and this considerably interrupts the learning of others in some classes. In response the school has implemented a new behaviour code which involves the use of a traffic light warning system. The pupils take this very seriously and it is beginning to show improvements. The pupils themselves say that occasionally, usually at break-times, behaviour gets too boisterous and language deteriorates. However, there is a clear relationship between the behaviour of pupils and the quality of teaching, and in the best lessons behaviour is good because pupils are interested and motivated in their work. The majority of pupils get on well with each other and there have been no incidents of racist behaviour or any permanent exclusions. Pupils describe the school as a 'family' with genuine pride.

Improving attendance levels is a school success story. They are now broadly average overall and high in some classes, although there is still some variation. Persistent absence is much reduced and the school is applying a good range of sanctions and rewards. Every absence is now followed up within a day if no acceptable reason is provided.

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

- improve attendance – good.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching is satisfactory but variable in quality. As before, no lessons were inadequate but there were also no outstanding lessons. Key strengths are the

positive relationships between teachers and pupils, good use of additional resources, including technology, and detailed planning based on individual pupil targets. However, there remain some key weaknesses. Few teachers ask supplementary questions that are designed to offer genuine challenge or assess understanding. Timings within lessons are often too complex. This leads to fragmented sessions, interrupted by frequent changes of activities, in which the amount of time pupils actually spend working rather than simply listening to instructions is reduced considerably. This caps progress. Similarly teachers' expectations remain low. Comments by teachers, including in their marking, are often too congratulatory or simply unnecessary, adding no new insights. All teachers are keen to implement change and welcome professional development opportunities. However, the range and extent of such opportunities are not yet extensive. For example, few teachers work in pairs to learn from best practice.

The school has reviewed the curriculum and changed the timetable significantly since September to ensure it is broad and balanced, and meets statutory requirements. The daily literacy and mathematics lessons are beneficial and teachers are working hard to make the curriculum more exciting by supplementing it with a wide range of visits and visitors. They receive good support from other adults, although the impact of this support is variable and it is occasionally distracting in classes when too strident. An inclusive approach for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that classrooms are happy places, but a few pupils with particular additional needs are not always supported well as the school lacks the capacity to fully meet their needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leadership and management in the school are currently undergoing change during the absence of the substantive headteacher. However, the previous good work of the second-tier leadership team of the deputy headteacher and Key Stage 2 phase coordinator make effective use of increasingly accurate pupil assessment data. This has been supplemented by a high level of rigorous analysis and appropriate professional challenge provided by the Interim Executive Board, although the outcomes of monitoring are not yet used to refine future actions or planning. The deputy headteacher makes highly effective use of increasingly accurate pupil assessment data.

In a short space of time the new acting headteacher has managed to secure the support of staff, parents and carers and governors and, crucially, the pupils. He has already accurately analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has produced a plan to strengthen the professional development of teachers and other adults in school, added appropriate items to the school development plan, and articulated a useful ladder of priorities. These include a greater emphasis on improving mathematics, a strengthening of the monitoring process, an acceptance of the need to improve attainment and behaviour whilst maintaining the high quality of

pastoral care, and a detailed evaluation of the impact of any changes. This list is exactly what is required. Since the last monitoring visit, some impetus was lost while changes were implemented slowly or reluctantly. An important recent improvement is the sense of urgency and readiness for change now evident throughout the school.

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

- improve leadership and management – satisfactory.

External support

The school receives considerable additional support from the local authority and other consultants, for example in securing an experienced acting headteacher at very short notice. It is mainly of good quality and appreciated. However, managing this extensive support is becoming problematic for the school and it is not yet leading to rapid improvement in attainment.

Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the rigour in the monitoring of teaching and learning to iron out inconsistencies, and use the findings to improve the clarity and effectiveness of professional development and school improvement planning.
- Review the impact of the timetable changes on pupils' learning.
- Review the use of external support to ensure that it is clearly focused on raising attainment, and having the desired impact.