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6 October 2011

Mrs Sandy
Headteacher
Tattershall Primary School
Clinton Park
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Dear Mrs Sandy

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Tattershall Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 October 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 in 9 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 – good

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 Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, eradicate underachievement and make teaching consistently good by:
 - ensuring accurate assessment information is used meticulously to plan next steps in learning for each pupil
 - raising expectations of what pupils are able to do and can produce in a lesson
 - limiting the use of worksheets to develop pupils' independent recording skills, so that progression in learning is evident
 - providing opportunities for pupils to refer to and build on their previous work, so they can use and develop existing skills
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge, especially in how to teach writing and mathematics
 - ensuring pupils have planned opportunities to practise and extend their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects
 - all staff consistently following agreed behaviour management strategies.

- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - members of the governing body developing their role of challenge and finding out for themselves how well the school is performing
 - focusing lesson observations and book scrutinies on learning and providing staff with clear guidance about how to accelerate pupils' progress
 - holding staff accountable for the progress of pupils, expecting at least 85% of pupils to progress by two National Curriculum sub-levels a year.

- Ensure the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities by:
 - immediately reviewing and up-dating all policies and procedures, especially those relating to safeguarding
 - ensuring an effective behaviour management policy is implemented by all staff so all pupils feel safe within school.

Special measures: monitoring of Tattershall Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 04 October 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, school staff, a group of pupils from the school council, parents and carers, members of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority.

Context

Following the school being identified as requiring special measures in December 2010, the substantive headteacher left the school. An acting headteacher was appointed from January 2011, who has taken a fixed term contract from September 2011. The local authority provided an interim headteacher in a supportive role initially to the acting headteacher. The interim headteacher is acting as an adviser to the middle management team from September 2011. Since the last monitoring inspection in May 2011, two fixed-term teachers have replaced the temporary teaching arrangements and an additional teacher has been appointed to improve teaching ratios and provide additional focus in numeracy.

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

While still below what is nationally expected, pupils' achievement is improving because they are making better progress and are happier in school. There is a very positive atmosphere in all of the lessons, giving pupils the best chance of success. A fresh start this term, for many with new teachers, and a reaffirming of the school's high expectations, has ensured that pupils are receptive to learning. Improvements in teaching across the school and carefully-planned interventions for raising standards in literacy and numeracy are beginning to bear fruit.

Although the last Year 6 cohort did not reach the national average in English, mathematics and science, the school's results were the best for three years. The large majority of pupils had made rapid progress overall from January to June 2011, making up some ground from inadequate progress in previous years. Only a small minority did not make the progress expected of them. Similarly, almost all pupils who were identified as having a special educational needs and/or disabilities made satisfactory progress or better in all areas. The school monitors any pupils who are not making the required progress very carefully indeed and adapts the teaching and the interventions they receive with rigour.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 reached above the national average in reading, below average in writing and slightly below average in mathematics in their end of year tests. However, pupils made at least satisfactory progress overall between January and

June 2011 and for many this was especially significant given their low scores on completing the Early Years Foundation Stage. The large majority of last year's reception children completed the year with skills and knowledge which, although approximately in line overall with what is nationally expected for their age and stage, was too low for around half of the children in key areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.

Accurate assessment is now embedded across all year groups. Staff are using this information to ensure they meet individual as well as whole class needs. Pupils are clearer of their next steps and what they need to do to improve. Expectations are higher for all children and the challenges presented to pupils are greater. Writing and calculation right across the school have been identified as weaker areas.

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics and eradicate underachievement – **satisfactory**

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour continues to improve and is now consistently good across the school. There is a uniform and well-understood approach to managing undesirable behaviour, which occurs rarely. The school has effective systems for monitoring pupils' attendance. Across the school it is improving, particularly in the reception class and amongst the oldest pupils. However, the school has rightly identified that attendance is still an issue with the Year 1 and 2 pupils, so continues to work hard with families to ensure the school figures reach the national norm. There have been a very small number of fixed-term exclusions this term, but the school is helping those very few pupils significantly and supporting them all they can to overcome their behavioural challenges. There is much more evidence of close friendships and pupils being able to work and play harmoniously. They display mutual respect for their fellow pupils and the adults in school. They work well together in pairs and this is now a regular feature of the lessons. Carefully chosen trips out of school enhance pupils' wider knowledge and life skills. Swimming lessons on a rota basis encourage self confidence and ensure active participation in sport. This is further enhanced by pupils' attendance at a range of lunchtime and after school clubs, which are valued by pupils and parents and carers. Well-chosen topics in assembly contribute to pupils' self reflection and good citizenship. The school council, once established each academic year, makes a successful contribution to the school community. Pupils enjoy their form assemblies and presentations to their families. Pupils' grasp of basic skills, problem-solving and applying their existing knowledge is beginning to prepare them adequately for the future.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching has continued to improve across the school. Nearly all teaching is satisfactory or better and there are a higher percentage of good lessons than at the last monitoring visit. Staffing is now stable. New members of staff have brought additional skills to complement the skills of existing teachers. They are able to teach more securely now that behaviour has improved so significantly. Staff are more confident in using assessment information to inform their planning and they are also more adapt at checking pupil progress throughout the lessons, and adapting further if they need to.

The whole school has undertaken a drive to improve reading and writing. These sessions are making a strong contribution to children's understanding of letters and their sounds, building words and conventions of writing. There is more work to do to secure pupils' application of their knowledge, but work in books and listening to them read shows that pupils are more confident writers and readers, and show more enthusiasm for both. Teachers skilfully encourage pupils to use a wider and more exciting vocabulary in their speaking and writing. Work has also begun on improving pupils' numeracy skills. Significant gaps in pupils' learning are being filled by an additional teacher with advanced skills in this area working very closely with teachers and teaching assistants. Consistency in the teaching of mathematics is beginning to emerge as the school particularly assists struggling mathematicians. Pupils prefer using practical equipment and staff make available physical resources as much as possible. Teachers have now begun to think about how pupils can use their literacy and numeracy skills in other parts of the curriculum, although this remains at an early stage.

Thorough management of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they are effectively supported. This includes scrutiny of their progress, the evaluation of the interventions and support they receive and close working with other schools and agencies. The quality of care, guidance and support has improved by including support staff in good quality training and thoughtful deployment of all adults in and out of the classrooms. Ratios of staff to pupils are favourable and pupils are often taught in small groups appropriate to their needs. Staff know pupils well and genuinely enjoy working with them. This enthusiasm spills over to the pupils, so that they are motivated and interested in their learning. They say they feel safe in school and know that the dedicated staff really care about their welfare.

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

- Make teaching consistently good – **good**

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school continue to improve at a pace. The senior leadership team have been relentless in their commitment to turning the school around. There have been some additional incoming members to the middle management team, which is now securely in place. This team is effectively supported by the former interim headteacher, who knows the school well. This has served to strengthen the whole team, develop leadership capacity and distribute roles and responsibilities more fairly. New expertise and skills have been utilised well and there is now much good practice internally to be able to share amongst the team. Staff are supportive of each other and work hard to promote the positive ethos of the school. Strategic planning is now more effective and policies and procedures have all been reviewed to check for relevance. The school's self evaluation is accurate and staff are held to account for their progress towards their targets by the governing body, which is now monitoring the school more effectively. The school vigilantly fulfils its statutory responsibilities, including those in relation to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils and recruiting safely. Staff training in this respect is up to date. Governors have undergone further training and awareness raising; they understand how to analyse school data against national expectations. Members of the governing body take their individual and collective roles seriously, including rigorous auditing. Governor duties are planned strategically to coincide with school improvement activity. Named governors have conducted a detailed evaluation of progress towards the school's and local authority milestones. Additionally, they have organised themselves to have a special interest in one particular class each. The aim of this initiative is to ensure that every teacher is fully responsible for the progress of each cohort as they move through the school and that outcomes for that group of pupils are as good as they can be. Sound recruitment strategies and appointment of key staff have stabilised staffing, which has in turn accelerated the school's and pupils' progress this term. It is perceived that this will take longer to have a full impact on standards. However, the school has redefined its improvement plan and regularly evaluates the impact of its actions. The school has further increased its engagement with parents and with other carers, such as grandparents, some of whom take an active role in the upbringing of their grandchildren. The school values the views of parents, carers and the community and uses this information to inform school improvement. New initiatives such as the 'green bags' with home activities in and innovative homework, which enables parental involvement, and new family learning courses all ensure that parents are better able to support their children's learning. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the improvements they are witnessing first hand. Some of them say that: 'there is no comparison with how the school used to be. Staff are so approachable and we feel able to share any concerns we have.' Many parents spoken to also confirmed that for the first time their children genuinely enjoyed coming to school and had much more of a desire to read books at home than had previously been the case.

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

- Improve the leadership and management at all levels – **good**
- Ensure the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities – **good**

External support

The quality and impact of the external support provided for the school by the local authority, including extending the role of the interim headteacher to work with wider management in school and the professional adviser for schools, are good. The support has been sensitively applied in order to ensure the school builds its own capacity to manage. There has been slightly less direct input from the range of local authority advisers and consultants, but they have still been on hand to monitor the school's progress and to moderate the school's data and the pupils' work, which has been highly beneficial, and to support staff in a closely targeted way. The local authority has supported the essential resourcing of the new literacy programme and the role of the numeracy specialist, but these decisions have been astute and made a considerable impact on filling pupils' gaps in learning and aiding pupils' progress. The local authority has also been instrumental in creating staffing stability and in providing an additional teacher to keep class sizes manageable and teaching groups smaller, ensuring that pupils have more direct teacher input. The support of the local authority has contributed to the strengthening of leadership and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is now good, and to the strengthening of the governing body, which is also good. The local authority recognises that its original statement of action was ambitious and this has now been redrafted in the light of school changes and progress so far. Many of its original interim targets have been met, however, and the remaining targets are all partially met. It is now back on course to achieve the milestones for the school in the timelines set, recognising that raising standards and reducing underachievement at the upper end of the school remains challenging despite the improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and pupil progress.

There are no further priorities for action.