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Monday 10 October 2011

Mrs E Pollard
Headteacher
Beverley St Nicholas Community Primary School
Holme Church Lane
Beverley
HU17 0QP

Dear Mrs Pollard,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Beverley St Nicholas Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Thursday 6 October 2011 and Friday 7 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on Monday 28 June 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

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 the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely,

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on Monday 28 June 2010

- Raise standards and improve achievement for all pupils in all subjects, particularly in Years 1 to 4 and in mathematics throughout the school, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information to support their planning
 - lessons challenge all pupils appropriately, particularly the more able pupils
 - low-level disruptive behaviour is managed consistently and effectively.

- Improve the school's capacity for sustained improvement by ensuring that leaders and managers:
 - take swift and effective action to improve behaviour so that all pupils feel safe at school
 - monitor the school's work rigorously, particularly the quality of teaching and learning, so that these are consistently good
 - hold teachers to account for the progress of all pupils in their classes
 - promote effective teamwork and better staff relationships across the two sites.

- Ensure that the governing body contributes more effectively to improvement by:
 - monitoring the work of the school rigorously
 - holding leaders to account for the school's overall effectiveness.

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Beverley St Nicholas Community Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection from Thursday 6 October 2011 to Friday 7 October 2011

Evidence

The inspector visited 10 lessons and sampled behaviour in a further six lessons. He observed the work of teaching assistants and teachers working with individuals and groups. Daily routines were observed including start-of-day activities, assemblies, break time and lunchtimes. He scrutinised documents, including the school's plans for improvement and the school's records of pupils' attainment. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, a local authority officer, members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governor Body. Work in pupils' books from across the school was also scrutinised.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been some changes to the school's context. One teacher left the school and one full-time teacher, a member of the senior leadership team, changed to become a part-time teacher. The Key Stage 2 leader has become the Key Stage 1 leader and a new Key Stage 2 coordinator has been recruited. One teacher continues to be absent due to sickness and her class is being taught by a temporary teacher. Three new governors have been recruited and there are currently two vacancies on the governing body for community governors.

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

The most significant achievement has been to improve attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. The 2011 unvalidated results show that attainment at Key Stage 1 was better than in the previous five years and was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the attainment of boys in reading and writing lagged behind that of girls. Improvement at Key Stage 2 has been more limited; performance in English and mathematics was below average and was particularly low in English. The results fell short of the agreed targets and were well below the government's floor target for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 in both English and mathematics. In English, the proportion of pupils attaining at Level 5 was very low compared to average and boys' attainment in writing was well below average. Overall, this group of pupils did not make enough progress over their time in Key Stage 2, which was the direct result of poor teaching; a situation which is now being addressed.

The school's own data and tracking indicate that pupils across the school are making better progress. However, there is some variability and, although declining in size, there remain small groups of pupils who are not making the expected gains in their literacy and numeracy

skills each term. An examination of pupils' work confirms that there have been some improvements in both the quality and quantity of work completed by these pupils. However, there are inconsistencies and there is still much work to do in order to tackle the pockets of underachievement that remain in the school, particularly for boys in writing. Additionally, across the school the quality of handwriting, letter formation and presentation is sometimes poor.

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

- raise standards and improve achievement for all pupils in all subjects, particularly in Years 1 to 4 and in mathematics throughout the school – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The behaviour of pupils and the systems that are used to manage behaviour continue to improve. During this inspection the school was calm and orderly at all times and pupils state categorically that it is almost always like this. Behaviour observed in lessons has improved and fewer instances of low-level inappropriate conduct were observed. The practice of teaching a small number of pupils separately in the nurture room for all their lessons has ceased. The two pupils who remain at the school from this group have been successfully re-integrated back into their classes. Consequently, they are benefitting from being taught by a teacher and are making better progress in their learning.

Pupils state clearly that they feel safe and well cared for in and around the school, including in classrooms and outside spaces. They say that they like the fact that the space for playing football has been re-assigned making it easier for other pupils to use the playground unhindered by footballs and footballers. Classroom behaviour is managed appropriately and on this visit no inappropriate behaviour was observed and much good and at times outstanding behaviour was displayed. Behaviour was best where teachers had planned interesting and engaging tasks and made their expectations of pupils' behaviour explicit.

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

- take swift and effective action to improve behaviour so that all pupils feel safe at school and ensure that low-level disruptive behaviour is managed consistently and effectively – good

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve. All of the lessons that were sampled were at least satisfactory with a growing proportion that were good or included good features. This reflects the greater stability of staff and their desire to improve the quality of their work on the learning and progress of pupils in the classes they teach. Good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that the learning environment in classrooms is purposeful. Planning has improved and, as a consequence, learning intentions are clear and are routinely shared with pupils. In the most effective lessons, these are referred to regularly so that pupils are able to assess if they have made the expected gains. Teachers have

improved how they use their knowledge of pupils to plan work for at least three different ability levels or plan to provide extra help for those they think will need it. However, although this is improving, there remain times when the tasks are not always at just the right level for all pupils; tasks are sometimes over complicated. Although there is some evidence of improved challenge for the most able pupils, such as in a mathematics lesson where some Year 2 pupils were using a protractor to find right angles, this remains inconsistent. Pupils are making better progress where teaching is consistently more engaging and meaningful. This was clearly seen in one lesson where pupils were motivated and engaged to write poems personifying items found in school. The use of questioning to check on pupils' understanding is generally used well. However, there are times when opportunities are missed to demand greater detail from pupils' responses and teachers do not always model good spoken responses.

Since the previous monitoring visit, there has been training to improve the quality of pupils' independent work in lessons and to improve the role of teachers when they are working with small groups. However, the quality of this work varies and there are inconsistencies, particularly where the role of adults is concerned. In some instances, teachers and adults were not deployed most effectively to improve learning in a planned way. The use of plenaries, where learning and the lesson objectives are reviewed, is an established feature of lessons. However, sometimes the length of time devoted to these is a bit too long and pupils lose interest, consequently their learning slows. Additionally, after all pupils have reviewed their own learning or the work of others, opportunities are missed to allow them to improve their own work.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The senior staff continue to tackle the school's key weaknesses. Their greatest success has been to tackle issues associated with the behaviour and attitudes of pupils so that almost all pupils state that they feel safe because behaviour in lessons and around the school is better. However, there remain some inconsistencies in implementation and impact of other developments. For example, the impact of training on guided reading and writing is not being universally felt in lessons. The use of termly pupil review meetings, where every pupils' progress is reviewed by the class teacher and senior staff, continues to ensure that pupils' achievement is at the centre of the school's work. However, although there have been some improvements, the impact on the attainment and progress of pupils continues to be variable. The school's own evaluation of attainment and progress and current targets has identified that there is further work to do, particularly if the attainment of boys in writing is to be improved.

The headteacher's report to the governing body has been improved so that governors are made aware of the outcome of monitoring activities, such as lesson observations. The skills

of senior staff at monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning are continuing to develop. There is scope to refine the arrangements for monitoring further so that the implementation of key developments is more closely checked. The newly recruited mathematics subject leader has made a good start at leading improvements in mathematics, for example, with the introduction of a mathematics computer club and a 'maths challenge'. However, the impact of these has yet to be felt. Other subject leaders are improving the way that they report to the governing body.

Members of the governing body have continued to benefit from training and local authority support. The recently recruited local authority governors are having a positive impact on the work of the governing body. They have brought valuable experience. There is evidence that members of the governing body are being proactive in asking for specific pieces of information and are confident in questioning the senior leaders.

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

- improve the school's capacity for sustained improvement – satisfactory
- ensure that the governing body contributes more effectively to improvement – satisfactory

External support

Support for the school continues to be satisfactory. The local authority has continued to provide staff training and ongoing support.