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13 October 2011

Mrs N Nelson-Taylor
Executive Headteacher
Walbottle Village Primary School
The Green
Walbottle Village
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE15 8JL

Dear Mrs Nelson-Taylor

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Walbottle Village Primary School

Following my visit with Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick, additional inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 3 March 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 be appointed subject to the following qualifications:

the mentoring arrangements are the responsibility of the partner school, and the local authority regularly checks the support for, and development of, any Newly Qualified Teachers.

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 Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley
Her Majesty's Inspector

September 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 3 March 2010

- Raise attainment and hasten the rates of learning and progress in English and mathematics lessons by ensuring:
 - the school's regular assessment information is always used to inform planning so that work is consistently matched to pupils' needs
 - all teaching interests and challenges pupils to achieve their best
 - marking is always informative and enables pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

- Raise attainment and ensure pupils make progressive gains in their learning in science by:
 - developing teachers' knowledge and skills, and the resources to teach the subject well.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring staff work together cohesively to support improvement by involving them more systematically in the evaluation of the school's work and in improvement planning
 - holding the staff to account for their pupils' progress
 - tackling staff absence rates
 - developing the role of coordinators and staff in monitoring their areas of responsibility by observing lessons, reviewing planning and pupils' work
 - ensuring the governing body holds the school's leaders to account for tackling weaknesses
 - ensuring the school improvement plan outlines key actions, measurable outcomes and precisely how success will be evaluated.

Special measures: monitoring of Walbottle Village Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection from 11 October 2011 to 12 October 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including observations of eight part-lessons, which ensured that each phase of education and all four class teachers were observed at least once. They scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher and acting head of school, key staff from within the school and from Beech Hill, a national support school which is the partner school in the formal collaboration. They also met with members of the governing body, the school achievement partner and a group of children from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Context

With effect from 1 October 2011, a governing body has replaced the Interim Executive Board (IEB). The chair of governors is the chair of both Walbottle and Beech Hill, strengthening the formal collaboration between the two schools further. Walbottle and Beech Hill now have the same school achievement partner. Some remodelling of the building has taken place in order to create a dedicated library and quiet reading area and to improve the main school hall. Since the last visit, two teachers and three classroom support staff have left the school. The executive headteacher, a National Leader of Education, has become the permanent executive headteacher across the collaboration of schools.

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

The school's own and unvalidated national data for the academic year 2010/11, show that impressive gains in pupils' attainment and progress have been achieved, continuing the strong trend of improvement in pupil outcomes. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was significantly above average. This is because all nine pupils made at least two levels of progress to achieve the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher Level 5 also increased, and in both English and mathematics was more than double the national figure. Similarly, Year 2 pupils made at least two levels of progress. Externally moderated assessments show that at the end of Year 2, all 14 pupils attained the expected Level 2 or above in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieved as well as their classmates and better than their peers nationally. Teachers' assessments indicate that in science, pupils' achievements also improved strongly and matched those seen in English and mathematics. These significantly improved results provide concrete evidence of the direct impact of the intensive steps taken to accelerate the learning of each individual pupil and to improve the quality of teaching, leadership and management.

In the part-lessons observed during this monitoring inspection, almost all pupils were making good progress and thoroughly enjoying their learning. This is because teachers are using assessment information and pupils' views to plan activities that are closely matched to their needs. As a result, pupils settle quickly to their tasks and are very focused and actively engaged learners. Pupils are challenged to do their best and are provided with frequent opportunities to self-assess their progress and reflect on their achievements during lessons. Pupils know their individual learning targets and are very proud of their achievements. A strong focus on developing pupil's reading abilities is evident throughout the school. This makes a very effective contribution to raising pupils' attainment in other subjects. Pupils are very clear about the importance of developing their literacy and numeracy skills. They report that the separate library and quiet reading area, in place since the start of the term, is enhancing their enjoyment of reading.

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

- Raise attainment and hasten the rates of learning and progress in English and mathematics lessons – outstanding
- Raise attainment and ensure pupils make progressive gains in their learning in science - outstanding

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Attendance is improving steadily. Pupils' behaviour continues to be good. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet current requirements.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve. Robust and regular tracking and assessment of pupils' progress means that teachers are taking good account of the different stages pupils have reached when they plan activities and providing timely additional support to halt any under-achievement when necessary. Lessons are generally well structured to help pupils take small steps in learning so a good pace is maintained. Both teachers and teaching assistants share a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They work well together to keep a close watch on how pupils respond to questions and problem-solving tasks and are skilled in giving prompt help to individuals. The school's marking scheme is consistently applied. Older pupils in particular are using the marking scheme to reflect on their own and each other's learning, celebrate their successes and make their own well considered judgements about what they think they need to do next.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The clear focus and drive for improvement in reading, writing, mathematics and science has paid dividends as evidenced, for example, by the pupils' achievements at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the better progress that pupils are making in lessons. A full leadership team

is now in place. Leadership capacity has been strengthened further through the formalisation of the collaboration with Beech Hill. The executive headteacher and executive leader responsible for both Walbottle and Beech Hill have forged a strong and productive partnership with the acting head of school at Walbottle, and continue to provide authoritative, well-judged and experienced direction to the school. Support and coaching from Beech Hill staff is ongoing and well received. All four class teachers now have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and are included in planning that informs strategic direction.

Monitoring and evaluation takes place routinely and informs improvement plans. Members of the IEB made effective contributions to the life of the school throughout the period of its operation, and played an important and active role in monitoring and reporting on progress against specific actions. Some members of the IEB have been elected to the newly-formed governing body which superseded the IEB on 1 October 2011, in order to provide continuity and ongoing support for the school and other newly-appointed governors.

The Early Years Foundation Stage and the curriculum were additional foci for this monitoring inspection. Whole school planning and the development of the curriculum for reading, writing, mathematics and science is thorough and well considered, and makes an effective contribution to the improved outcomes pupils have achieved in these subjects. While themed topic work has been introduced and provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, planning for other subjects and the development of the broader curriculum is not yet as extensive or firmly embedded. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are settled and happy. However, senior leaders acknowledge that there is still some work to do to put in place effective strategies to manage the challenges the physical layout of the unit creates both inside and outdoors in order to improve the quality of provision and provide children with the very best opportunities for learning and play. Some adjustments are also required to the staffing in the Early Years Unit at certain times of the day to accommodate the higher than anticipated number of nursery-aged children who joined the school in September, and to provide support for a newly qualified teacher. Appropriate plans to address these issues and to sharpen and improve planning for the broader curriculum have recently been put in place.

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

- Improve leadership and management – good.

External support

The school has continued to receive good support from the local authority, the school achievement partner and through the formal collaboration with Beech Hill.