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11 November 2011

Mrs Lacey
Headteacher
Hallgate Primary School Cottingham
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HU16 4DD

Dear Mrs Lacey

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hallgate Primary School Cottingham

Following my visit with Rosemary Batty additional inspector and Ken Buxton Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 9 and 10 November 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2009. 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

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

Mr John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

September 2011



The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009

- Raise standards and improve the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning to make it at least consistently good in all classes
 - ensuring that pupils are given the guidance they need to improve their work
 - using assessment information to match work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities
 - developing a more creative curriculum, which matches pupils' needs and interests
 - challenging the more-able pupils to ensure that they achieve their potential.
- Improving the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all groups of pupils are meeting challenging targets
 - identifying a manageable number of key priorities and producing detailed action plans to bring about improvement
 - making the best use of available time and resources so that pupils stay motivated and engaged throughout the lesson.
- Improve the school's governance by:
 - developing the role of the governing body in monitoring, evaluating and driving the school's improvement
 - ensuring the governing body holds teachers to account for the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that policies meet statutory requirements and are kept up to date.
- Improve outcomes and the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that indoor and outdoor activities are challenging and purposeful and clearly linked to all areas of learning
 - using day-to-day assessment more effectively to inform the next steps in learning for individual children
 - providing better opportunities for developing children's creative skills.

Special measures: monitoring of Hallgate Primary School Cottingham

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on the 09 and 10 November 2011

Evidence

The inspectors observed 17 lessons throughout the school. They reviewed school self-evaluation documents and action plans. Discussions took place with staff, pupils, four members of the governing body and a local authority representative.

Context

The turbulence in staffing reported during previous monitoring inspections has abated. The numeracy coordinator has returned to work following a lengthy absence. The literacy coordinator, who has not been a long-term absentee but who was absent during two of the previous three monitoring inspections, was present at this inspection. A new member of staff has replaced the Year 2 class teacher who retired at the end of the past summer term. There has been some reorganisation and there are now more mixed-age classes. In addition, some teachers have been moved to take charge of classes in different year groups or phases of learning. The former Key Stage 2 coordinator is no longer in the role.

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

Standards are rising, which is exemplified by pupils' attainment by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 2 now exceeding age-related expectations, and an overall narrowing of the deficit attainment gap at Year 6. Most pupils' achievement has also risen and a higher ratio of pupils gained the highest levels that can be reached in the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 national tests in 2011. However, there are still issues with pupils' progress in mathematics and the overall achievement of groups, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's latest tracking data of other year groups reveals evidence of some very rapid progress, although this is punctuated by slower progress by the same vulnerable groups previously highlighted. Work to boost the quality of writing and reading is paying dividends.

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

- raise standards and improve the rate of pupil's progress - satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

The increasing impact of teaching on pupils' learning is reflected in their rising achievement. However, the teaching observed during the inspection did not substantiate this. The lessons jointly observed by inspectors and the headteacher and the deputy headteacher agreed that several of those seen were inadequate. The most effective sessions were characterised by an active, practically-based learning approach with demanding activities and good support.

Staff are using assessment information to plan work more that is more suitably matched to children's needs, which is proving generally successful, but is not yet demonstrating a secure enough impact on the learning and progress of some vulnerable groups. Pupils, including more-able ones know their short and medium-term targets but the extent to which they were challenged, or equipped to achieve them varied. The deployment and effectiveness of teaching assistants continues to improve.

Further refinements to the curriculum are helping to bring learning to life for pupils and stimulate their curiosity and interest. For example, when studying mountain explorers they were thrilled to be able to experience climbing a large-scale wall which was erected in the playground. There has also been a Wizard of Oz theme day which pupils said they loved.

Teaching seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage was impressive. A knowledgeable and capable team of committed staff have further refined the indoor and outdoor learning environments to take an even fuller and more explicit account of all areas of learning, and to provide children with a richer, more inclusive and engrossing educational experience. Children's learning is skilfully planned and facilitated by highly effective staff making good use of high-quality resources in order to stimulate children's curiosity, creativity, independence, and the development of core learning skills and dispositions. Assessment practice on a day-to-day basis is precise and rigorous and used increasingly well to inform the next steps in learning for children.

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

- improve the outcomes and the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage - good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and some capable middle leaders are to be commended for their uncompromising change management and the continued improving profile against each priority area. However, some elements of middle leadership have proved divisive.

Senior leaders are applying a series of well thought out strategies to raise academic standards. These include regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work; changes to class organisation and the placement of staff; 'raising the bar' in terms of expectations of staff and pupils; buying-in specialist staff to help improve pupils' writing and focused intervention for underachieving groups. The school's senior leaders are acutely aware that if the school is to be removed from special measures next term that they must sustain the improvements secured to date and prove they have arrested the decline in pupils' achievement in mathematics. They also accept that they must be able to show that they are securely and rapidly accelerating the achievement of groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to be eligible for

free school meals. The school's staffing is now back to full strength which is a real fillip, including the return from long-term illness of the mathematics coordinator.

The governing body demonstrates a clear understanding of exactly where the school is presently situated on their journey out of special measures. Whilst recognising the good ground gained in pupils' academic outcomes and the impact of teaching on learning they recognise that there are aspects that have not yet responded sufficiently well to the interventions applied and therefore still require urgent attention. Members of the governing body are increasingly informed and assured in their strategic support and challenge. A series of probing key questions have been devised to drive the monitoring and evaluation of the school's progress against the priority areas. A calendar sets out when and what will be scrutinised and which policies will be checked for compliance. To further involve parents and carers in the life of the school and their children's education and improve communication, the school is inviting parents and carers to observe their children's learning, recruiting parents and carers to read with children, allowing them to lead after-school art and running clubs and are in the process of launching a new website.

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

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels - good
- improve the school's governance - good

External support

The local authority continues to provide a degree of support to the school. However, the volume of intervention has been scaled back considerably as the school's senior leaders demonstrate their increasing capacity to drive improvement more independently.