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19 January 2012

Mrs Barnett
Headteacher
Hilderthorpe Primary School
Shaftesbury Road
Bridlington
East Yorkshire
YO15 3PP

Dear Mrs Barnett

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hilderthorpe Primary School

Following my visit with Kathryn Dodd, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 January 2012, 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 May 2011. 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 – 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 for Children, Family and Adult Services for East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2011

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, particularly that of boys in Years 5 and 6, by:
 - providing more opportunities to learn through undertaking practical and investigative activities
 - providing reading materials and learning resources that stimulate boys' interest
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of contexts
 - using information and communication technology (ICT) extensively, both as a teaching aid and as a visual learning resource.

- Improve pupils' behaviour and conduct outside lessons by:
 - adopting a consistent approach to behaviour management to ensure that pupils move about the school in a safe and orderly manner and with respect for the safety and welfare of other pupils and adults
 - ensuring that pupils follow school rules
 - ensuring that pupils' ideas for improving behaviour are considered when drawing up strategies
 - ensuring that adults check and deal appropriately with every instance of inappropriate behaviour
 - helping pupils to learn self-discipline and take responsibility for their actions eradicating bullying, name-calling, racist incidents and homophobic comments.

- Ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are robust and that pupils receive sufficient support to enable them to keep themselves safe.

- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - following up more rigorously persistent and occasional absenteeism
 - working more closely with parents and carers to reduce the number of holidays taken in term-time
 - offering a range of short-term incentives to promote good attendance.

- Improve the quality of individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs by:
 - improving teachers' record-keeping
 - ensuring that individual education plans have specific targets accurately matched to pupils' learning needs

- involving parents, carers and pupils in agreeing targets in order to help pupils take the next small steps in their learning and to keep parents and carers fully informed of their children's progress
- checking and reviewing provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities more often so that targets are changed when needed.

Special measures: monitoring of Hilderthorpe Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 January 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, including those related to safeguarding, and met with the senior management team, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the chair of the governing body, groups of pupils and parents, the executive headteacher and representatives from the local authority. Ten lessons were observed.

Context

The substantive headteacher at the time of the May 2011 inspection which placed the school in special measures left the school shortly after the first monitoring inspection in October 2011. The school is now led by the local authority appointed deputy headteacher who is now the acting headteacher. The school continues to be supported by an executive headteacher. The management team has been expanded since inspectors last visited the school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The measures put into place by the school's leaders to improve the achievement of pupils are beginning to take effect. Teachers are, for example, taking up the challenge to ensure that pupils learn through more investigative learning and for them to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of contexts. In addition, pupils are now producing greater quantities of work that is of an improving quality.

During this inspection there were no discernable differences between the learning of boys and girls. There were, however, differences in learning between ability groups. This means that, overall, while there are signs that the progress of pupils is improving, it is not the accelerated progress needed to boost standards from the low levels attained in previous years. There are two reasons why this is so. First, while there is improved consistency in the way teachers plan beforehand for the learning of the different groups of pupils in classes, the uncertainty about the accuracy of assessments made in school means the execution of these plans into teaching and learning is not consistent. This has meant that planned expectations do not always materialise and that learning opportunities in lessons do not always meet the needs of all pupils. Second, there is a tendency for lower ability pupils to be grouped to work mainly with the teaching assistants, thereby missing out on the contributions of their teachers and peers. On occasions it is the teaching assistant doing the work rather than the pupils.

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, particularly that of boys in Years 5 and 6 – satisfactory

The quality of teaching

During this inspection the best teaching was observed in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. Such teaching captured the imagination of all pupils and involved teachers' good knowledge of what all their pupils could do. As a result, the expectations of all pupils, whatever their abilities, were high. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher successfully built on the previous learning of pupils to extend their knowledge and use of ratio so that, where appropriate, ratios could also be expressed as fractions. The teacher's constant questioning of all pupils enabled her to identify who required additional support and who needed to be challenged further. Resources, including the teaching assistant, were deployed well to reshape planned activities to reflect the pupils' needs. Such good questioning, knowledge of pupils and high expectations were also evident in a Year 5 science lesson where the pupils successfully investigated reversible and irreversible changes in materials. In both lessons all pupils were engaged in their learning and, as well as making good progress, thoroughly enjoyed what they were doing.

While this quality of teaching is not a consistent feature across the school, good elements of teaching were observed in all lessons, for example, in the setting of clear learning objectives. In addition, the quality of marking is improving particularly for the older pupils, although it is not consistently strong across the school. A good improvement has been in the quality of individual education plans for all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and not just those who have statements. The much more regular involvement of parents and carers and pupils in drawing up and reviewing these plans – the intention being that contact will be made on a half termly basis – means they are now clearer than in the past and better understood by all partners.

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

- Improve the quality of individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs – good

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Leaders have acted with urgency to address the concerns relating to safeguarding raised in the May and October 2011 inspections. There is now greater rigour with the weekly in-school checks taking place as planned and risk assessments for educational visits specific to the school. There is also greater rigour in the way any incidents of poor behaviour are checked, recorded and reported, although some inconsistencies remain. No comments or incidents of a racist or homophobic nature were evident during this inspection. Good behaviour is promoted more routinely in lessons and around school, for example through the 'Good to be Green' initiative, than was observed during the previous monitoring

inspection. Pupils and parents and carers spoken with were convinced that behaviour continues to improve and the inspection findings support this view. All were confident their concerns are taken seriously and recognise that there is more to be done. In the playground, for example, while improved, behaviour can be too boisterous. This, however, is more to do with a lack of use of the equipment already acquired which sometimes leads to boredom rather than deliberate misbehaviour. Likewise in class, because pupils are not always engaged in their learning as fully as they ought to be, they are not always attentive to the adults or each other.

The attendance of pupils continues to improve with the designated member of staff continuing to build up positive relations with parents. Initiatives, rewards and positive promotion of better attendance, making use of visiting theatre groups for example, have seen attendance rise eight percentage points to stand currently at just over 94%. Likewise the significant reduction in those pupils persistently absent has continued.

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

- Improve pupils' behaviour and conduct outside lessons – satisfactory
- Ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are robust and that pupils receive sufficient support to enable them to keep themselves safe – satisfactory
- Improve pupils' attendance – good

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Following the inspections of May and October 2011 the task facing the school to secure improvement was enormous. However, the lack of rigour preventing progress reported in the past is being eradicated. While there is still much to do there is a renewed sense of urgency. The actions taken by the acting and executive headteachers have been the correct ones. Their determined leadership and taking of some tough decisions, coupled with the increased involvement of the management team in finding solutions, are ensuring that the capacity of the school to be able eventually to stand on its own feet is growing.

The establishment of a committee of the governing body to hold the school to account for its safeguarding of pupils has been a positive step. Also positive is the knowledge and understanding shown by the chair of the governing body of what the school needs to do to improve. However, not all meetings of the governing body are attended as well as they might be and the current arrangements for the programme of meetings do not present governors with frequent opportunities to support the school, hold its leaders to account, or challenge them to make further improvements. Nevertheless, the school has made good progress since October 2011 to get itself in a position where it can move forward with greater confidence to improve outcomes for pupils.

External support

The support and challenge provided by the local authority, particularly its adviser attached to the school, continue to be robust, regular and frequent. The local authority has worked

with the school to act quickly to put leaders in place following the departure of the previous headteacher and to ensure there is appropriate funding to assist putting the planned improvements in place.

Priorities for further improvement:

- Ensure, at the earliest opportunity, a baseline of accurate assessment information so teachers can plan and teach with confidence lessons that meet the differing needs of pupils and which accelerate their progress.
- Establish a timetable of frequent meetings of the governing body which allow it to support the school, hold its leaders to account, or challenge the leaders to make further improvements.