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02 February 2012

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 with Anthony Kingston, additional inspector, and Sara Morrissey Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 31 January and 1 February 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in 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

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

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in 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 fourth monitoring inspection on 31 January and 1 February 2012

Evidence

The inspectors evaluated 14 lessons and sampled behaviour in a further five lessons. They observed the work of teaching assistants and teachers working with individuals and groups. Daily routines were observed. They 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, the Chair of Governors and parents attending a meeting at the school. 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. Following a period of absence due to sickness, a teacher retired at the end of December. This class continues to be taught by a temporary teacher who will continue in post for the duration of this academic year. Two new teaching assistants have been appointed to work with individual pupils with special educational needs. Although there have been elections for parent governors and two have been recruited, there are currently two vacancies on the governing body for a community governor and a parent governor.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Teachers continue to track the attainment and progress of every pupil closely each term. Recent internal assessments indicate that pupils across the school are making better progress. More pupils are on track to reach their end-of-year targets in reading, writing and mathematics and more are on track to reach age-related levels. However, although declining in size, there remain small groups of pupils who are not making the expected gains each term.

An examination of pupils' work confirms that there have been some improvements in both the quality and quantity of work completed. A recent initiative to improve writing skills across the school is beginning to have an impact on the content of pupils' writing and their regular extended pieces of written work are showing secure improvement. Strategies to improve letter formation and handwriting are beginning to have an impact on the quality and presentation of work across the school. However, the legacy of poor handwriting and presentation means that for some pupils their gains in improving the content of their writing are sometimes masked by their inability to write neatly.

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

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching continues to improve. On this inspection no lessons were inadequate and an increased proportion was securely good. Where teaching was satisfactory, good features were evident. Good relationships between staff and pupils promote pupils' generally positive attitudes to school and learning. Teachers are paying greater attention to the way that they plan tasks for the full range of abilities within each class. Consequently, in the most effective lessons pupils of all abilities were challenged and extended. However, on a small number of occasions there is still some variation and some opportunities are overlooked to extend some pupils.

An improvement seen on this inspection is the way that teachers are planning to use their time during lessons to support the work of particular groups. Where this is effective, time is used well and teachers are able to target the support and challenge that they offer. For example, in a Year 6 writing lesson the teacher worked with a small group of more-able pupils to help them to improve their writing by adding the correct punctuation for direct speech. However, occasionally teachers do not plan how to use their time and instead supervise and wait for pupils to seek help before they respond. Occasionally, where teachers have worked with a target group and provided good direction and explanations, they do not ensure that pupils complete work. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. Typically, they provide clear instructions and detailed explanations. However, despite this, in the satisfactory lessons pupils' undeveloped independent working skills limited the extent to which they were able to complete work. Consequently, they do not gain maximum benefit from these lessons and work is sometimes incomplete.

Teaching assistants are deployed well in most lessons. This works best where they have identified pupils or groups of pupils to work with. However, there remain times, particularly during whole-class teaching sessions, where they are inactive and not involved in pupils' learning. A strength continues to be the quality and detail of most teachers' marking. Pupils across the school are increasingly able to talk with confidence about the levels they are reaching in their work and, more importantly, what they need to do to improve their work.

A particular focus for this inspection was early reading. On a previous visit it was clear that systems and procedures for teaching early reading skills were inconsistent. This inspection was able to confirm that new procedures have been established, including a well-structured programme to teach phonics (the sounds that letters make). While it is still in its infancy, it is a coherent and well-considered programme. It is applied consistently and enthusiastically throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes. A strength of the programme is the range of strategies which emphasise and take advantage of the links between speaking, reading, writing, spelling and handwriting. A significant and important development of the school's actions to improve pupils' achievement in reading is the

promotion of a culture which promotes reading for enjoyment and provides extra help when necessary. For example, one Year 2 pupil who was awarded a prize for her enthusiasm to take books home to share with her family said, 'I wasn't very good at reading. Then I had extra lessons. Now I'm a good reader and I really love it.'

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour and the systems used to manage and encourage good behaviour continue to improve. Pupils state that they understand the rules and believe these are fair; on this inspection the school was almost always calm and orderly. From the time that pupils enter the school buildings they are clear about the routines they are expected to follow to keep the school safe and conducive to learning. Pupils understand the need to walk while inside and move around the school sensibly. They are polite and respectful to visiting adults.

Behaviour observed in lessons has improved. Where inappropriate behaviour was observed, effective teaching did not allow this to disrupt the learning of others. Pupils state clearly that they feel safe and well cared for. They state that bullying is rare and if they have any concerns they are confident that the staff will deal with them. Pupils talk positively about receiving raffle tickets in recognition of their good behaviour or effort. The winners of the raffle look forward to dining at the top table on Friday.

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 – satisfactory

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The quality of leadership and management continues to improve. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well to implement planned improvements. The most notable success has been to eradicate inadequate teaching and secure more good teaching. The headteacher has a clear sense of direction. She is rigorous at holding staff to account and is not afraid to challenge underperformance. This has been done effectively by regularly checking on the work of staff by, for example, routinely scrutinising the quality of pupils' work and teachers' marking. Pupils' progress review meetings, which consider the progress made by every pupil, are having a positive impact. However, there remains a small core of hard-to-shift pupils, whose progress in reading, writing or mathematics is not secure.

The leadership of improvements to teaching and learning has been successful because class teachers have been made aware of what is expected of them and the systems to check on how improvements are being implemented are clear. The focus of this work has now moved

from general improvements to more specific work, often with individual teachers, to fine-tune improvements.

The tracking of pupils' attainment and progress continues to be used well to hold staff to account, to identify pupils who need extra help and to check how close the school is to meeting its targets. There is a history of discrepancies in turning teacher assessments into externally validated assessment results. While teachers' assessments are generally accurate, particularly in writing, senior leaders and managers are acutely aware that they need to check on the accuracy of school-based assessments. For this reason they are working with the local authority and other schools to moderate their assessments. Senior leaders and managers regularly collect and analyse information about the progress and attainment of pupils. However, opportunities are missed to use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of their work on particular groups of pupils, such as those who are benefiting from extra help or those who speak English as an additional language.

At subject leader level there have been some notable successes. For example, the new mathematics coordinator has introduced a school-wide 'maths challenge' which is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' confidence in mathematics. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator and the English coordinator have risen to the challenge of reviewing and improving the approach to teaching early reading. However, the impact of these initiatives has not been demonstrated over time. While there have been successes, the role of middle leaders and managers remains an important area for further development if the school is going to demonstrate that it has the capacity to improve without high levels of external support. Some leaders and managers are new or have changed responsibilities. Consequently, plans for improvement are not in place or do not reflect the current priorities in that particular area.

The effectiveness of the governing body continues to improve. Governors are continuing to develop the way that they question and challenge the work of the school, most commonly by asking questions at meetings. Governors have restructured their meetings and complement their three termly full governing body meetings with three curriculum meetings, where they review the school's progress in English and mathematics. English and mathematics subject leaders routinely provide reports and presentations for governors but the plans to extend this practice to include other National Curriculum subjects are at a very early stage. Although one of the newly recruited governors has attended some induction training, there are no formal arrangements to induct new governors into the work of the governing body.

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. There is clarity about the next stage of development for the school which includes the need to develop leadership potential at middle leader level and the need to recruit and retain a full complement of governors.