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24 February 2012

Mrs L Ford
Headteacher
Usworth Grange Primary School
Marlborough Road
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Tyne and Wear
NE37 3BG

Dear Mrs Ford

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Usworth Grange Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 and 23 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 September 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 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 Executive Director of Children's Services for Sunderland.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012



Annex

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science so that it is consistently good throughout the school by:
 - urgently reviewing the needs of those pupils who are potentially vulnerable or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those currently educated in the attached unit, and taking action to effectively meet these needs
 - using information from the tracking of pupils' progress to identify underachievement and to plan interventions which quickly help pupils to make up lost ground
 - ensuring that the curriculum is planned in a way which progressively develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills
 - providing boys with a curriculum which engages them fully in learning.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - improving teachers' ability to accurately assess pupils' attainment
 - ensuring that the resulting information is used to plan challenging tasks for all groups of pupils
 - closely monitoring pupils' work in lessons in order to provide further support or challenge
 - giving pupils detailed guidance on how to improve their work through the use of targets and feedback from marking.

- Increase the effectiveness of leaders, managers and the governing body in driving improvement by:
 - thoroughly evaluating all aspects of the school's work
 - ensuring pupils' progress is accurately assessed, rigorously monitored and thoroughly analysed
 - holding teachers fully to account for the progress of all pupils in their classes
 - taking action to improve the understanding and skills of leaders at all levels so they play a full part in improving their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring the governing body monitors and evaluates the work of the school and challenges more rigorously the standards attained.

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Usworth Grange Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 February 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' work in books. He observed teaching and learning in every class. He met the headteacher, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, teachers and teaching assistants, and discussed progress with a senior School Improvement Officer from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, a teacher who was on long-term leave has left and been replaced. A temporary teacher is covering for a teacher who is on long-term sick leave. A new local authority governor has been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Inspection evidence confirms school assessment information that pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science has continued to accelerate. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are making better progress and the gap between their attainment and national expectations is narrowing. Progress over time is more consistent and work in books shows achievement is continuing to rise as a result of sustained and effective intervention by leaders and class teachers. Groups of pupils, such as boys and those with disabilities and those with special educational needs in mainstream classes, are making better progress because work is more engaging and better tailored to meet their specific needs.

Year 6 national test results in 2011 were close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. School predictions for 2012, based on a rigorous analysis of the most recent assessment information, confirm a further rise in attainment. Progress is improving in all classes, often from low starting points when pupils join the school. Improvement is less rapid in Year 4 caused by long-term staff absence. Teachers have a greater understanding of expected attainment in science and have received training on how to encourage pupils to investigate more rigorously. Progress in the special educational needs unit has steadily improved and is more secure as a result of new staff appointments. The unit is to close at the end of the summer term and pupils will be transferred to settings where their individual needs can be more specifically catered for.

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

- accelerate pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science so that it is consistently good throughout the school – good

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is rising and is much closer to being consistently good across all the year groups. This is because improvements to teaching, such as better planning and assessment, are making a greater impact on pupils' learning and progress which can be seen in their higher attainment. More-rapid learning is now at the heart of everything the school aims to improve. The school is taking the right action to continue improving the teaching and reduce the amount of cover required by temporary staff. Well-targeted professional development has equipped teachers to make improvements independently without support from consultants. Classroom and curriculum leaders are now empowered to intervene and improve the learning of different groups of pupils and they are achieving better as a result. Inspection evidence confirms the evaluation of teaching by school leaders and the local authority is accurate. Assessment practice is systematic, rigorous and embedding well. Information is effectively used to support individual learning. Marking in books helps pupils to know how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve and it encourages them to present their work neatly.

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

- improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better – good

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are concentrating for longer periods of time and find work in lessons more challenging and interesting. Behaviour around the school and in lessons has significantly improved as a consequence of the policy being consistently applied at all times. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they are working harder in lessons. The merit system is making a positive impact and is motivating pupils to be more successful and aim higher. Pupils feel safe in the school and like the new school uniform with a logo they designed. Attendance is average and a robust approach with rigorous procedures ensures parents, carers and pupils are clear about requirements. The recent absence of some pupils with the same illness reduced the number able to attend the school.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders and governors are securing the future of the school and making sure it moves forward at a good pace. Strong leadership has made a good impact and embedded ambition well. For example, middle and classroom leaders are becoming more empowered to make improvements to the teaching and adapt the curriculum to make pupils' progress more rapid. The school's capacity has been strengthened and rigorous improvement planning can be seen in better outcomes, such as higher attainment and achievement. The engagement of parents and carers has significantly improved and they are more fully involved in school life.

Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school and the areas for improvement continue to be rigorous and accurate. Staff morale is high and frequent pupil progress meetings are

held. The school continues to be increasingly effective in identifying where additional support is needed. The governing body is more rigorously monitoring and challenging the school. For example, a link governor spent the day with a Year 2 class during the visit and governors are more aware of the quality of provision and achievement of pupils.

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

- improve leadership, management and governance – good

External support

Support from the local authority continues to make a good impact, for example consultants in mathematics and literacy work in the school to improve teaching and assessment when required. Less support is provided to improve overall school effectiveness because the authority recognises the school has increased capacity to manage its own improvement. Links with a local school to provide professional development for staff have increased the school's ability to identify areas for improvement. The School Improvement Officer is challenging the school well and is sharpening the evaluation of performance.