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10 March 2012

Miss Kimber
Executive headteacher
Marshland Primary School
Marshland Road
Moorends
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN8 4SB

Dear Miss Kimber

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Marshland Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 March 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 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 - good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - good

Newly Qualified Teachers may not 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 of Children's Services for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely

Peter Cox
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics and ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across the school by:
 - ensuring the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - giving pupils clear guidance through teachers' marking about the steps they need to take to improve their work
 - providing more carefully targeted work that better matches the needs of individual pupils.

- Improve the curriculum by:
 - ensuring it fully meets pupils' needs
 - promoting basic skills in increasingly practical ways to engage pupils, boys in particular, more readily in their learning
 - improving the links between subjects and so make learning experiences more interesting and enjoyable for all groups of pupils.

- Develop the effectiveness of all leaders and managers by:
 - sharpening evaluation so that it highlights priorities and sets a clear direction for improvement throughout the school
 - improving the accuracy and recording of tracking, monitoring and assessment information and use this effectively to plan pupils' future learning
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the school rigorously to account for its performance in order to bring about sustained improvement
 - ensuring that the governing body is fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the school
 - ensuring that the governing body accurately monitors the effectiveness of its own work.

- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - presenting attendance issues in a more engaging way to parents and carers so they appreciate better the importance of regular attendance
 - provide clear practical guidance to parents and carers to help them improve their child's attendance
 - increasing the range of rewards available to pupils.

Special measures: monitoring of Marshland Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 March 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, including six teachers teaching seven lessons, scrutinised a wide range of documents including leadership meeting minutes, governing body meeting minutes, pupil progress data, lesson observation data, records of the most recent local authority visit and the school improvement plan. Meetings were held with pupils, teachers, members of the leadership team, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, the headteacher has been absent from school. A teacher is covering for a maternity leave in Year 1. An additional teacher has been employed in Year 5 and is supported by a teaching assistant on loan from a school within the local cluster. The previous Local Leader of Education is no longer working with the school due to other commitments. The local authority, together with the governing body, has secured a headteacher from a neighbouring school to lead Marshland for the remainder of the academic year. Classes have been re-arranged so that pupils are taught in single year groups, not mixed-year groups as seen at the previous monitoring inspections. The school continues to pursue academy status with its neighbouring high school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Predictions for the current Year 6 pupils suggest that attainment in 2012 will be much improved on last year. The school's improved and increasingly accurate monitoring data, moderated by colleagues at the neighbouring cluster school, indicate that all pupils should secure Level 4 or above in mathematics and 94% of pupils Level 4 or above in English. The rate of pupils' progress is anticipated to be in excess of that seen nationally. However, this reliable data also confirms that pupils' writing skills remain weaker than expected across the school, although improving in Year 6. Improvements in overall achievement are being secured by the reorganisation of the mixed-year classes, seen at the previous monitoring inspections, into single year classes. This has provided a sharper focus on learning that more accurately matches pupils' ability. In teachers' planning and at the start of lessons, learning is defined more clearly and contains accurate success criteria that pupils understand. Furthermore, pupil numbers in classes have reduced allowing more opportunities for one-to-one and small group teaching by the class teacher and their assistants. Teaching assistants have undergone recent training to strengthen their support skills. As a consequence, they are better deployed within lessons and more effective in helping accelerate pupils' achievement. There is a strong work ethic among teachers and pupils with much higher expectations of what can be achieved. One pupil commented on the changes made since the last monitoring inspection saying that 'I have worked my socks off to help the school improve', they went on to say that more pupils are now doing the same.

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

- raise attainment in English and mathematics and ensure pupils make consistently good progress across the school – good

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved markedly. Teaching spaces are brighter and more orderly. Appropriate classroom routines continue but contain a sharper emphasis on pupils' progress. Marking and commenting on pupils' work has been embedded further with much more evidence of the 'think pink, got it green' strategy. This is now being used more consistently across classes and is well responded to by pupils. It is raising teachers' awareness of pupils' understanding and helping teachers provide direction on what pupils need to do to improve further. Additional time and support for pupils requiring help in their understanding and progress in learning is now more immediate and effective. Easy to understand and accurate tracking systems help teachers plan the next steps in learning for particular groups and individuals. The tracking provides an 'at a glance' overview of those pupils who are underachieving, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1 and the lower part of Key Stage 2. This tracking helps inform accurate lesson planning and is showing some success in improved attainment of those currently working at levels below those expected for their age. The school is aware of the need to accelerate this further.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The overall level of attendance continues to increase and is now above average. The school has built successfully on the improved systems and procedures introduced last term by monitoring attendance levels carefully and engaging with families. Pupils speak of behaviour being much improved in class and on the playground. Behaviour for learning expectations are known to all and used effectively in lessons, helping create a positive and calm learning environment where pupils talk of feeling safe and secure and ready to learn. Safeguarding requirements are met.

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

- improve attendance - good

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The arrival of the executive headteacher in January 2012 has brought to the school a clearer direction and a robust determination to secure sustained improvement. The senior leadership team has been extended to include two members of staff responsible for literacy and numeracy across the school. This allows for devolved responsibility, accountability and professional development opportunities. All these changes are beginning to have a positive impact on helping secure improvements. Lesson observations have been undertaken, the findings of which are accurate. There is now an improved structure to senior leadership team meetings with minutes that demonstrate purposeful discussions and targeted actions

focused on raising achievement. Other staff meetings have been introduced with the sole purpose of monitoring pupils' progress. Class timetables have been redesigned to help provide uninterrupted learning and continuity in activities throughout the day. For example, assemblies are now held later in the afternoon and lessons on guided reading take place across the school at the same time in the mornings. The executive headteacher has used colleagues from her school to help improve teaching in Years 1, 3 and 5 with success. Leaders and managers have reshaped the curriculum that now includes a better balance of core and foundation subjects, for example, more time for music and drama. However, the impact of this very recent introduction is not possible to measure, therefore progress is satisfactory. The governing body continue to hold the school to account with increasing rigour. The strategic direction embarked upon is monitored and evaluated regularly. The executive headteacher, her senior colleagues and the governing body are demonstrating an improving capacity to improve.

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

- develop the effectiveness of all leaders and managers – good
- improve the curriculum - satisfactory

External support

The local authority has been instrumental in providing good additional external support to the school. They, along with the governing body and senior leaders, understand the importance of well-considered succession planning to come into effect when the executive headteacher returns to her substantive post and for when the proposed academy arrangements are confirmed.