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16 March 2012

Mr Jonathan Gallimore
Executive Headteacher
Hardwick Primary School
Dover Street
Derby
DE23 6QP

Dear Mr Gallimore

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hardwick Primary School

Following my visit with David Cousins, additional inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 – inadequate.

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 Interim Executive Board (IEB) and the Director of Children's Services for Derby.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Meet all requirements for ensuring children's safety with immediate effect by:
 - ensuring all necessary checks on staff are recorded appropriately
 - ensuring the governing body monitors procedures and practice more closely
 - ensuring that all staff understand the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - securing stability in the leadership of the school and ensuring that all staff engage fully with the school's drive for further improvement
 - developing the analytical skills of all leaders and teachers, so that they are able confidently to interpret data about the performance of different groups of pupils
 - developing rigorous self-evaluation and effective improvement planning at all levels
 - ensuring that whole-school strategies are implemented fully by all and evaluated carefully, as part of a structured programme, to check for their effectiveness.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school, so that 100% is at least satisfactory and 60% is at least good by July 2012, by:
 - ensuring that teachers make effective and accurate use of assessment information to match activities to pupils' abilities when planning lessons
 - ensuring that teachers identify, within lessons, when pupils are ready for the next steps in their learning
 - quickening the pace of lessons and ensuring that teachers do not talk for too long
 - developing greater consistency in the quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils.
- Raise levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and accelerate pupils' learning and progress across the school, by:
 - improving the curriculum to meet better the needs of all pupils by ensuring individual topics identify a clear structure of skills and knowledge
 - improving pupils' language skills by providing more opportunities for pupils to talk to each other and participate actively in their learning
 - ensuring that pupils fully understand what they are expected to learn in lessons and are able to evaluate the progress they are making
 - raising pupils' attendance to at least 94% by July 2012.

Special measures: monitoring of Hardwick Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 14 and 15 March 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the associate headteacher, groups of pupils, a member of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), a representative from the local authority and teachers.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been replaced by an IEB, which held its first meeting in February 2012. An executive headteacher has been appointed to work in the school for four days a week and an associate headteacher for one day a week. Currently the deputy headteacher is on long-term leave.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The acceleration in pupil progress since the last inspection has been limited. Consequently, the school has been unable to demonstrate that the attainment gap between the low standards for reading, writing and mathematics in school and those expected nationally is narrowing. Better quality teaching in some classes in Years 5 and 6 is ensuring that progress in lessons for different groups varies between the ordinarily expected rate of progress to above expected progress. In lessons for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4, progress is slower. In most lessons, groups of pupils make less than the expected progress or expected progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, improving provision combined with an effective use of assessment information to personalise learning are resulting in rising achievement.

Assessment information shows that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make much slower progress than other pupils. One reason for this is that provision, such as additional language support groups, is inadequate. Within these groups, there is insufficient focus on the different needs of pupils. These groups are a mix of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language and are recently arrived in the country. In most cases, they all do the same tasks and activities regardless of need.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- raise levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and accelerate pupils' learning and progress across the school – inadequate.

The quality of teaching

The reason why progress remains too slow, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, is because too much of the teaching is inadequate or just satisfactory. Teachers have benefitted from training to improve their teaching, for example, in the use of assessment when planning lessons. However, the expectations of leaders when providing this training have not been met because some teachers have not embedded what they should have learnt into their lessons. Pupils are generally grouped by ability but the tasks provided for some of them are not pitched at the correct level and are either too hard or too easy. Pupils correctly report that often they do not have sufficient time to complete their work. This is evident from an examination of their books. The reason for this is that some lesson introductions go on for too long.

There are signs of improvement. In nearly all lessons, teachers explain the learning intentions and success criteria to pupils, demonstrating a consistency of approach. A few teachers have improved their questioning skills. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson where pupils were learning about different points of view, good questioning elicited thoughtful, articulate answers. Teachers, in response to the recommendations from the last inspection, now give pupils more opportunity to talk to each other in lessons. This is improving their speaking and listening skills, level of engagement and enjoyment of learning. For example, in a good Year 5 English lesson, in preparation for writing a newspaper report, pupils were conducting interviews in pairs. One took the part of a newspaper reporter, the other as Goldilocks or one of the Three Bears. Not only did this prepare pupils with a wealth of ideas for their writing, but the addition of a task where they assessed each other's contribution gave pupils the opportunity to demonstrate outstanding behaviour.

The marking policy has recently been reviewed but recommendations have been implemented inconsistently by teachers. Consequently, pupils' understanding of the steps they need to take to improve their work are better where teaching is good but weaker in the rest of the school.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school – inadequate.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

As at the time of the last inspection, pupils continue to feel safe in school. Much improved safeguarding procedures now underpin this view. The attendance of pupils has risen considerably since the inspection and is currently average. This is a result of much more effective measures to encourage regular attendance.

Around the school, pupils continue to be polite, friendly and well-behaved. In lessons, the quality of behaviour is clearly linked to the effectiveness of the teaching. Where teaching is good or better, particularly in Years 5 and 6, relationships and engagement have a marked impact on the quality of learning. In satisfactory lessons, most pupils try to complete their work but pace is slower and they have limited opportunity to demonstrate their independence because tasks and instructions are too directed. Where teaching is inadequate, particularly in the language groups, behaviour deteriorates. Pupils were observed misbehaving as a result of the inadequacy of the provision.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher has improved the safeguarding procedures such as the single central record of staff so that safeguarding now meets regulatory requirements. There are less incidents of exclusion than in the past because of the better care for pupils whose behaviour is challenging. Procedures ensure that the IEB keeps a careful check on safeguarding. Consequently, the school has met the requirements of this issue for improvement. The executive headteacher has also led other improvements such as the raised morale of staff and the considerable rise in the attendance rate.

Where improvement is necessary in teaching, school leaders have not been able to demonstrate sufficiently that training and the checks on the quality of teaching are resulting in consistently better provision. The school improvement plan sets out the correct priorities for improvement but the actions to achieve this improvement do not get to the heart of what the weaknesses are in school that need overcoming. This means then that any training that takes place is insufficiently well personalised to meet the needs of individual teachers. In addition, all checks on teaching are the same for all teachers regardless of their capability.

Currently, the headteacher is insufficiently well supported by enough senior leaders, particularly phase leaders, who can drive the necessary improvements to provision. While they demonstrate that they are keen to do this work, they do not demonstrate that they know how to. The exception to this is the effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage. In addition, subject leaders for English and mathematics demonstrate an increasing understanding of their role and the steps they must take to improve provision. One reason for this variability in leadership ability is that the executive headteacher does not make his expectations explicit enough. For example, performance management sets out the correct targets for leaders in terms of pupil performance but does not sufficiently identify the necessary steps they must take so that they know what they have to do or how they will be held to account for their work.

The curriculum for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language remains weak. For

understandable reasons, the school has not prioritised improvements to subjects other than English and mathematics. Nevertheless, good quality displays and pupils' work shows that they benefit from a range of interesting and stimulating activities in other subjects.

At the time of this inspection, the IEB has only been established for a month and therefore the impact of its work on school improvement is not yet apparent.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve leadership and management – inadequate
- meet all requirements for ensuring children's safety with immediate effect – good.

External support

The local authority has recruited an executive headteacher and IEB to drive the strategic development of the school. However, these necessary steps have yet to have the required impact on school improvement. One reason for this is that minutes of meetings and school reviews show that the local authority is insufficiently rigorous in holding school leaders to account for sustained improvement. The local authority statement of action was evaluated and judged fit for purpose.