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28 June 2012

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

Dear Mrs Ford

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Usworth Grange Primary School

Following my visit with Margaret Armstrong, Additional Inspector, to your school on 26 and 27 June 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 fifth 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 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 in 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 fifth monitoring inspection on 26 and 27 June 2012

Evidence

The inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' work in books. They observed teaching and learning in every class. Inspectors met the headteacher, parents and carers, 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, the deputy headteacher is covering for a teacher who is on long-term sick leave and two new parent governors have been appointed. A long-term supply teacher who started at the school in October 2011 has been appointed permanently since the 1 April 2012. A new Reception class teaching area has been created to accommodate the increasing number of children starting at the school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Attainment and achievement have continued to rise since the previous monitoring inspection. This is because of further improvements in the leadership and management of learning and the quality of teaching. The gap between the school's standards and the current floor standards this year, which the government sets for the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, has improved. Current attainment in English and mathematics at both key stages is close to average overall from low starting points. School predictions for Year 6 national test results in 2012 indicate a further rise in attainment.

Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making more rapid progress and their achievement has accelerated. The progress of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science is continuing to improve and attainment is rising. Effective action has been taken to accelerate pupils' progress in Year 4 after being hampered by long-term staff absence. The sustained and effective intervention by leaders and class teachers reported at the time of the previous monitoring inspection is sharper and making a strong impact on improving achievement. Inspection evidence confirms that the progress of all groups of pupils, including boys and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, continues to improve as a result of work being better matched to their specific learning needs.

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

Good teaching and learning can be seen more consistently across the classes resulting in further improvement in pupils' progress. The proportion of good teaching has improved. Teachers have higher expectations of what different groups of pupils can learn, and there is a better match between the work pupils are given and their ability. Work is more challenging and gaps in attainment are narrowing as a result of the improved intervention and guidance pupils receive. The quality of assessment practice is better and assessment information is used effectively to support individual pupil's learning. The school's marking policy is implemented more consistently as a consequence of sharing best practice. Inspection evidence confirms pupils are learning more independently as a result of improvements made to the quality of teaching.

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

Improvements in behaviour reported at the time of the previous monitoring inspection have been maintained. Staff expectations are high in order to provide the best possible climate for learning. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they are punctual to lessons. Work in lessons is more challenging and captures pupils' interest for sustained periods of time. New systems to manage behaviour are now firmly embedded and any incidents dealt with quickly. Incidents of poor behaviour have fallen by two thirds in the last year. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned a recent school survey questionnaire were positive about behaviour in the school. The number of exclusions has significantly reduced from 67 sessions lost to exclusion last year to three this year. Attendance is close to average and robust procedures make sure parents, carers and pupils are clear about requirements. The number of persistent absentees has fallen from 8.4% last year to 5.2% so far this year. This lower figure is broadly in line with the national average for persistent absentees. Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and pupils adopt safe practices.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders and members of the governing body have firmly embedded ambition and they are taking the right actions to ensure the overall effectiveness of the school continues to move forward. Middle and classroom leaders now routinely make improvements to the teaching and adapt the curriculum to make pupils' progress more rapid. This is strengthening the capacity of the school to improve. The impact of more-rigorous planning can be seen in the school's increasing effectiveness to sustain improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is dealing successfully with the points for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection report. Procedures to monitor the effectiveness of the school are rigorous and the impact of actions is evaluated regularly. Governors have been involved in

training in order to challenge the school more rigorously and the governing body is making a strong impact when acting as a critical friend. Parents and carers are more involved, for example, two new parent governors have been appointed and a parent group formed.

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

- improve leadership, management and governance – good

External support

The school has increased capacity to manage its own improvement and the local authority is reducing its support after taking important steps to secure the future of the school. The headteacher works closely with the governing body and the local authority to successfully improve the school's overall effectiveness. The school improvement officer continues to challenge the school well and has trained the governing body and middle leaders in specific aspects of their work.