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6 July 2012

Miss Kimber
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 3 and 4 July 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 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 be appointed on the condition they are mentored under the direct supervision of the deputy headteacher from the executive headteacher's school.

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

January 2012



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 fourth monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 July 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, including six teachers teaching six lessons and one whole-school assembly. He scrutinised a wide range of documents including; pupils' progress data, lesson observation data, records of the most recent local authority visit and the report of their recent review. Other documents that were scrutinised included; leadership meeting minutes, governing body meeting minutes, curriculum information and an analysis of pupils' work. Meetings were held with Year 5 pupils, teachers, members of the leadership team, members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body from the neighbouring school and a representative of the local authority. A discussion took place with the newly appointed member of staff due to start in August responsible for the coordination of the teaching and learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Context

The substantive headteacher remains absent from school. Since the last monitoring inspection, a different teacher is covering for a teacher undergoing maternity leave in Year 1. The executive headteacher continues to lead the school and draws on staff from her own school when the need arises. During the monitoring inspection, a deputy headteacher from this school was covering the Year 5 class. Pupils in Year 6 were not in school as they were experiencing transition days in preparation for their move to secondary education in September. The school is undergoing a consultation process with the intention to secure a hard federation arrangement with the executive headteacher's school. If approved, the two schools will federate on 1 November 2012.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Reliable school data predicts attainment of the current Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics to be above average at Level 4 with some significant gains seen in progress since the return to single-age classes and the improved quality of teaching. The proportion of pupils making the expected progress in English is likely to be slightly above the national average. According to the school, all pupils are likely to make expected progress in mathematics. The proportion of those achieving the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics is likely to be below the national average but is showing a significant increase on the previous year. The school recognises that further improvement is required in reading and writing in Year 1 and lower Key Stage 2. The sterling efforts of the Year 2 teacher have resulted in some impressive and imaginative writing in her class, helping to strengthen achievement by the end of Key Stage 1. The regular morning activities in each class of guided reading and teaching letters and sounds (phonics) is proving successful in developing

and securing pupils' skill in literacy. A positive start has been made with an intervention scheme to boost reading for some pupils. Achievement for those taking part has improved markedly. Overall, achievement is much stronger than previously because of better quality teaching. Pupils receive teaching that is engaging and challenging and helps pupils of all abilities to make progress in line with and often in excess of their abilities and starting points. One pupil commented that 'lessons have really improved and are fun... the school has come on 'heaps and bounds!'

The quality of teaching

Better quality teaching is securing pupils' better attitudes to learning and improved achievement. Teaching is becoming more engaging and challenging and pupils speak of learning something new in almost every lesson. The marking of pupils' work has improved and now better informs them on what they need to do to reach the next steps in their learning. The 'think pink, got it green' strategy is now deeply embedded in each class; regular marking and comments from teachers are the expectations of pupils. The literacy and numeracy coordinators ensure weekly monitoring of teachers' marking. This was a development in its infancy at the last monitoring inspection but is now an established routine and one that all teachers see the benefit of in helping improve pupils' progress. Energetic and passionate teaching was seen in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, where pupils were encouraged to explore strategies for multiplication. The highly-skilled teacher blended literacy into this lesson very successfully and made regular reference to the classroom's learning wall, helping secure pupils' understanding further. In the Year 3 lesson on 'the jobs that Victorian children used to do,' there was striking evidence of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development where pupils were asked to imagine their long hot working day down a coal mine where ghosts of those miners who had previously died still lingered! This lesson was further enhanced by an audio-visual presentation by the teacher to set the scene. Teaching assistants continue to play an important role in the classroom, supporting individual pupils and groups under the direction of the teacher. The school recognises the need to provide further opportunities to support the teaching assistants to enable them to better assist the process of pupils' learning. The quality of teaching and the progress children make in the Reception class is a significant strength of the school. There is recognition that this impressive start to the children's education needs to be capitalised upon in Year 1.

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

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Attendance is now high having improved further since the last monitoring inspection. Pupils' attitudes to learning is much better and the need for teachers and their assistants to intervene to re-align behavior, much reduced. Behaviour in the classrooms is much more conducive to improved learning. Behaviour around the school is much improved; pupils

appreciate the need to act in a mature and safe manner. During an assembly, given at the end of the day, pupils' behaviour was impeccable. The only time some of the pupils' attention wandered slightly was when the teacher talked for too long. Pupils would benefit from being more involved in assemblies.

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

- improve attendance - good

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The school's self-evaluation is very accurate. The senior leadership team, under the inspired leadership of the executive headteacher and the strong support of the governing body, are increasingly successful in driving through the required improvements. The tracking of pupils' performance is robust. The quality of teaching in lessons is monitored regularly and has helped contribute to pupils' improved achievement. A new curriculum model has been introduced and now provides better opportunities for the coverage required of the National Curriculum. The model adopted provides for accelerated development of pupils' skills. It allows for a creative theme-based approach and provides opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their child's learning, particularly at the beginning of each topic and on its completion. At this point, parents and carers are invited into the school to celebrate their child's successes. High levels of attendance were seen at the recent completion of a topic on the Vikings. Implementation of this reshaped curriculum is in its early stages and while there is secure evidence of some success in promoting improved learning, the full impact of it has yet to be seen across the school.

The relationship between the two schools under the executive headship is impressive. Much strength has been brought to the school through strengthened leadership and management, including the developing shared governance. Members of the governing body continue to hold the school to account rigorously and this contributes to an ever increasing capacity to improve. The school currently operates very well under a 'soft federation' arrangement that exists until the desired more long-lasting arrangement is approved. Marshland has and continues to receive help from the partner school but is taking opportunities to reciprocate, for example, by sharing their experience of the new curriculum.

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

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

External support

The local authority continues to provide effective support. It has undertaken a full review of the school's effectiveness recently, which confirms the improvements made. The school leadership is demonstrating an increasing ability to stand alone.