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5 July 2012

Mrs Bessant
Headteacher
Wath Victoria Primary School
Sandymount Road
Wath-upon-Dearne
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S63 7AD

Dear Mrs Bessant

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Wath Victoria Primary School

Following my visit with Rosemary Batty, Additional Inspector, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2012. 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 – satisfactory

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford

Her Majesty's Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Improve the achievement of all groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6 through raising their attainment and ensuring they consistently make at least good progress in English and mathematics by:
 - establishing firmly a full range of procedures to assess pupils' learning to include effective questioning, feedback to pupils on how to improve their work and the regular involvement of pupils in assessing their own work
 - ensuring teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are accurate so that the work planned is well matched and suitably challenging to meet pupils' individual needs
 - ensuring teachers' marking consistently provides points for development so that pupils always have improvement points to work on as well as opportunities to respond to these comments to consolidate their learning
 - developing the curriculum so that activities are planned that fully engage and motivate pupils and improve their basic skills and their spiritual and cultural development, especially their awareness and appreciation of multicultural society
 - ensuring that the impact of the above actions improves the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better.

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - restoring the senior leadership team to its full complement
 - ensuring that leaders develop a clear and ambitious vision for the school and more effectively support and direct whole-school improvement
 - ensuring all leaders evaluate the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility and accelerate school improvement through more robust monitoring of teaching, and more rigorous management of performance ensuring that the impact of the above actions improves the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better.
 - ensuring that the governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and offers robust challenge to leaders where necessary.



Special measures: monitoring of Wath Victoria Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 July 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, read management documents and scrutinised pupils' work. They met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a newly qualified teacher, groups of pupils, the Chair and two members of the Interim Executive Board and two representatives from the local authority.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and she took up her post 10 weeks before this visit. There have been a small number of changes to staffing and two new teachers will start on permanent contracts in September 2012. An Interim Executive Board (IEB) has been appointed by the local authority to replace the governing body. The Department for Education requires the IEB to identify an academy sponsor for the school before October 2012. The local authority is in the early stages of planning a new building for the school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6, in English and mathematics, have risen since the last inspection. This is because improved teaching enables more pupils to make progress at the expected rate or better. The greatest improvement is in Years 5 and 6. In other year groups, more pupils are working at the levels expected for their age, however, while there is a notable increase in some classes, there is insufficient in others. This variability is due to the fact that not all teachers are improving their practice at the same rate.

The group of pupils who have accelerated their progress the most are those of average and above average ability who were previously underachieving and not reaching the levels expected for their age. Their better performance is the result of senior leaders using assessment information more effectively to identify them early and to help them catch up. A minority of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are improving their progress because their teachers and teaching assistants adapt lessons well to meet their needs. The majority, however, are not making sufficient progress because the leadership and management of school systems for planning and reviewing their support are inadequate. The new headteacher had already recognised this and she commissioned a full local authority review which has pinpointed in detail where the weaknesses are.

The greatest improvement in attainment is in pupils' writing, which reflects the high priority given to improving teaching in this subject. Pupils' reading skills are improving because the school has recently bought a wide range of interesting books and teaching resources, which



are being used with increasing skill by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are improving their skills in using letters and sounds due to well-planned and systematic teaching.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Improve the achievement of all groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics – satisfactory

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and inadequate teaching is greatly reduced. Teaching is not improving at a uniform rate across the school therefore, while strengths are emerging, there are still significant areas of weakness. Most teachers have a much more accurate understanding of the levels at which their pupils are working, due to guidance from senior leaders and the opportunity to compare their assessments with those of colleagues. Some teachers use this information well to adapt their teaching approaches to the needs of different groups. Others are less skilful in this and, for example, do no more than vary the amount of work required from pupils of different abilities. Where teaching is improving most rapidly, teachers continuously use questioning and tasks on pupils' individual marker boards to check which pupils need more support or challenge. In other classes, this systematic checking does not take place and some pupils are left working at too low a level. In the most effective lessons, a very focused learning objective is shared with pupils and is then used as a basis for assessing their progress and providing them with guidance, both during the lesson and when marking their work. Again, this is not consistent across the school.

Plans are in place to redesign the curriculum in order to provide more stimulating and interesting learning experiences for pupils. In the meantime, teachers increasingly link subjects within topics, such as 'pirates', and use these to provide pupils with more enjoyable purposes for developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The new headteacher has reorganised the timetable to provide a better balance in the time given to teaching English and mathematics compared to other subjects. At the same time, she has reorganised classes to provide more efficient teaching groups with less movement between lessons. Pupils told inspectors that this means 'there's a lot less time wasted'.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better – satisfactory

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school has appointed a pastoral manager to support the headteacher and staff in working with the significant number of pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and whose attendance is poor. He has only been in post for two weeks but is



already accelerating the work started by the headteacher to foster a good working partnership with external support services and more constructive relationships with pupils and their families. Although this work is at an early stage, there is evidence of improving behaviour. There is still some significant misbehaviour outside the classroom and low-level disruption during lessons, but these are becoming increasingly rare. The attendance of some pupils is improving, although attendance overall is still low.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leadership and management at a senior level have improved significantly with the appointment of the new headteacher and the effective working partnership she has formed with the deputy headteacher. They are driving essential improvements with a strong sense of urgency while maintaining the full support and high morale of the staff. There is a shared determination among all staff to remove the causes for concern as quickly as possible. Senior leaders manage the performance of staff with rigour and sensitivity, which has already helped to reduce the incidence of inadequate teaching without delay. They set pupil-progress targets for each teacher to ensure that they are all contributing to a rise in standards of attainment by the end of Year 6, and appropriate support or challenge is provided when progress towards these targets slows down.

The headteacher has a very clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school's work and a strong sense of which weaknesses need the greatest priority. As a result, her improvement plans are very useful drivers for removing the causes for concern, concentrating the efforts of all staff on those actions that will help the school to bring about the biggest gains in standards of attainment. The headteacher has maintained the school's focus on these plans while dealing with the many problems presented by the poor accommodation and the lack of clear systems for ensuring the health and safety of the pupils. The accommodation is better organised but still not conducive to key aspects of pupils' learning, such as indoor physical education and continuity of education from Early Years Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1. Systems for safeguarding pupils are now in place and meet requirements.

The positive impact of the headteacher's plans for raising standards of attainment, in the context of the significant demands of the building, demonstrates the school's strengthening capacity to improve pupils' outcomes further. Most of the capacity, however, lies within the two members of the senior leadership team. Middle leaders currently have little influence on the quality of provision across the school and, while the headteacher has started to develop their role, it is too early to see any impact. The IEB was only established three weeks ago and they have very quickly established a good working partnership with senior leaders. They are already demonstrating their skill in assuring that teaching is improving and raising pupils' achievement. They are beginning to set up effective links with parents and carers in order to involve them in the future development of the school. A number of parents and carers have already given positive feedback to the IEB and the headteacher on what they think of the school's progress so far.



Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Improve the impact of leadership and management – satisfactory

External support

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. Its support for improving teaching and the use of assessment is effective. It closely monitors the school's progress, checking carefully that new approaches are improving pupils' achievement. Its feedback to the school is very helpful and provides useful guidance on what needs to be done next.

Priority for further improvement

- Improve the achievement of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs by ensuring effective leadership and management of the provision for them.

