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19 October 2012

Mrs Melisha Trotman
The Headteacher
Crowland Primary School
Crowland Road
London
N15 6UX

Dear Mrs Trotman

Special measures monitoring inspection of Crowland Primary School

Following my visit with Gillian Bosschaert, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 October 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Haringey.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment to at least national expectations in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2, by ensuring that:
 - all teaching is of consistently good quality
 - teachers' planning of lessons builds carefully on assessments of pupils' prior learning and is closely matched to the needs of pupils of all ability levels
 - appropriate pace, challenge and high expectations are features of every lesson
 - all teachers help pupils to know how to improve through consistently good quality marking linked to pupils' individual learning targets in literacy and numeracy
 - pupils have more planned opportunities to practise their reading, writing and numeracy skills across all areas of the curriculum.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management in driving and sustaining school improvement by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels are effective in checking and improving teaching and learning so that all pupils make rapid progress
 - school improvement plans and subject action plans have clear success criteria by which their impact on pupils' outcomes can be measured
 - the school's single central record is complete and meets all the statutory requirements.
- Improve the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
 - all adults develop their skills in questioning to support and encourage children's use of language
 - the monitoring of teaching is more rigorous by always focusing on children's learning and rates of progress when observing lessons
 - the curriculum provides sufficient adult input to extend children's learning, particularly in their language and literacy skills.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 October 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher from Gladesmore Secondary School, a representative from the local authority, and all teaching and non-teaching staff. Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staffing. A new deputy headteacher, an assistant headteacher, and an advanced skills teacher joined the school in September 2012. They replaced the three teachers who had left the school at the end of the summer term. In addition, several other teachers have taken on additional responsibilities as subject leaders.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Since the last inspection pupils' progress is improving strongly across the school. The standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising in most classes, but there is still a distance to travel before all pupils attain the levels of which they are capable. Pupils across the school are working at levels in reading, writing and mathematics that are well below those expected nationally for their age. Pupils in Year 3 in particular are very behind other pupils of their age. The pupils who left Year 6 in July attained higher standards than those achieved by previous year groups. This is because of the improvements in the quality of teaching, additional support through literacy and numeracy booster classes and from holiday revision clubs.

Many pupils are struggling to catch up because there are gaps in their understanding of the basic skills in reading, spelling, handwriting and mathematics. For example, some pupils do not have a good enough knowledge of phonics (matching letters to sounds) to read and spell words with confidence. Others, particularly those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, do not understand the meaning of words so their reading is not fluent. In mathematics, basic concepts such as counting on and counting back are not secure and pupils struggle with using number lines to help them. In most year groups, the gap in attainment between pupils who are eligible for the government's pupil premium funding and other pupils in the school is very wide, although the school is targeting these pupils for additional support and accelerating their rate of progress.

In the summer term the school introduced a new programme to teach reading. In September it was introduced to children in Reception. This is having a very positive impact on raising standards in reading. Already, most children in Reception

recognise and can sound out letters in the alphabet. In Key Stage 1, the standards in writing are still lagging behind those in reading, partly because pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise spelling alongside their reading skills. Pupils are now practising their handwriting regularly and, as a result, the presentation of work is improving.

In some year groups, good attention is given to developing pupils' vocabulary. In one lesson in Year 6, pupils made excellent progress in learning and using new vocabulary such as 'aesthetically pleasing' which was related to writing a balanced argument about living near rivers. Similarly, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the pupils made good progress using new mathematical vocabulary that means the same as 'increase' and 'decrease' by sorting out some word problems and finding the answers.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving. The proportion of good and outstanding lessons is increasing. During the inspection, in the best lessons teachers were clear about what they wanted the pupils to learn, used resources effectively to engage their interest and ensured that all learners participated fully, particularly in listening to and respecting each other in class discussions. Teachers are now planning lessons within a context that is meaningful to the pupils. For example, in an excellent Year 5 mathematics lesson, ratio was explained effectively by using comparisons between the numbers of pupils in the classroom. In a good lesson, the teacher put on and talked about her 'best shirt' to capture pupils' interest in the book they were reading. She had prepared this work well, anticipating pupils might get stuck on words like 'squirted', so she had a bottle of water at the ready to demonstrate squirting. She questioned individual pupils effectively to ensure they understood the meaning of the text. This was a memorable learning experience for the pupils.

In several lessons the technique of pupils repeating a phrase after the teacher was well used to help them to remember a new concept. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils were asked to recall how they counted on or back on the number line. The teacher had demonstrated how to 'count the jumps' on the interactive whiteboard, asking the pupils, 'What do we count?' and they responded, 'Count the jumps.' This simple technique of question and answer, call and response led to all the pupils in the class using their number lines correctly as it had been emphasised well by the teacher.

Weak subject knowledge is the main barrier to all teaching being of good quality. This is particularly the case where teachers are working with groups of pupils who need specific support to develop their communication, reading and writing skills and the basic skills in mathematics. Not all teachers have a clear picture of the small steps pupils need to make in grasping new mathematical concepts and, as a result, they fail to plan work in a sequential way that allows pupils to succeed. This means

that pupils lose confidence and feel disheartened when they do not make progress. In addition to this, not all teachers are monitoring the progress of individual readers closely enough. Pupils with weak reading skills do not practise their reading aloud every day with an adult in all classes. In some cases, where pupils choose their own reading books, particularly in Year 5, the appropriateness of their choice of book is not checked by the teacher. Consequently, inspectors heard pupils read from books that were far too challenging and in some cases far too easy for their level of reading. Guided reading is not used effectively to challenge and develop pupils' progress in reading, nor does it encourage pupils to want to read for pleasure.

Staff appreciate the good support and challenge provided by senior leaders. Teachers who have been on the 'Improving teaching programme' say it has improved their practice in the classroom. The introduction of the systematic synthetic phonic reading programme is supporting teachers to improve pupils' standards in reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, where pupils are reading well below their chronological age in Key Stage 2, there is not the same quality of systematic support to accelerate their progress in literacy rapidly enough.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive in most classes, particularly where the teaching is good. Behaviour was not an area for improvement at the previous inspection and staff, pupils and the responses on the school/parent questionnaire indicate that it has improved. Pupils were polite and helpful during the inspection. They are very friendly towards visitors. They say they 'like the raffle tickets and getting to gold'.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The governors made two key appointments to the leadership team this September who are supporting the headteacher well in her very determined drive to raise standards in the school. Consequently, the leadership team is now much stronger than at the time of the last inspection and is improving rapidly. Governors have taken decisive action to tackle underperformance and are set to respond rigorously where improvement is too slow. They provide strong support for the headteacher and visit the school regularly. However, because of their familiarity with the day-to-day workings of the school, they are not putting their own monitoring and evaluation systems fully to the test to check the impact of the school's actions.

The headteacher, well supported by her deputy, is highly ambitious for the pupils and is systematically putting support and challenge in place to ensure her staff deliver better quality teaching and accelerate the progress made by pupils. She has already had some notable success in this, with pupils leaving Year 6 in 2012 gaining the highest results in the national tests for several years. They keep a close eye on

the progress made by all pupils and hold regular challenge meetings with staff to ensure that their expectations are high enough. New leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is ensuring that the progress made by children in Reception is gathering momentum.

The headteacher is accurate about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Improvement plans set appropriate targets. The senior leadership team monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching regularly and targets support well, ensuring that staff who need to improve their practice are given good opportunity to do so. Staff are fully supportive of the headteacher's leadership. She is building a strong team who is willing to work extremely hard to improve the quality of education the school provides.

External support

The local authority statement of action and action plan are fit for purpose. The school improvement is being monitored appropriately by the local authority project board. The local authority is adjusting its support well in response to the increasing capacity and expertise within the school. Their partnership work with the school is good. The local authority is taking an active role in supporting the governors to set performance targets for the headteacher.

The headteacher is receiving excellent support from the headteacher of the neighbouring Gladesmore Secondary School. It has already provided additional teaching in mathematics and literacy, as well as a holiday school for Year 6 pupils. The headteacher appreciates the accurate guidance provided on issues such as the performance management of staff.