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Andrew Bramwell
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Bramwell

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Moat Hall Primary School

Following my visit with Doreen Davenport, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13–14 February 2013, 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 third 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed by the 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 Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise achievement and accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics, and ensure that pupils' attainment reaches the national average by July 2013, by:
 - establishing greater consistency in the quality of mathematics teaching
 - improving the teachers' knowledge of the subject
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better and has a positive impact on pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that all lesson planning and teaching take account of the specific needs of all groups of pupils, especially those of higher ability
 - achieving consistency in the teaching and pace of learning in lessons to accelerate the progress of all pupils across the school
 - improving teachers' marking across the school so that it guides pupils more effectively to understand how well they are doing and the next steps in their learning
 - teaching pupils the skills to evaluate the quality of their own work and that of others, so they are able to take control of their learning and assess their own progress.

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that rigorous and extensive monitoring of teaching leads to accurate evaluations that will have a direct impact on improving pupils' learning and progress, particularly in mathematics
 - evaluating the impact of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils
 - developing the skills and accountability of middle leaders and giving subject leaders opportunities to judge the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, so they have a clear picture of standards in their subject.

- Improve provision in the Nursery class so that it meets the learning needs of the children and accelerates their progress by:
 - ensuring that the activities planned to improve the children's basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy are better matched to their age and abilities
 - giving children experience of all the areas of learning indoors
 - ensuring that there are more accurate assessments in children's 'Learning Journeys' to help staff build on what the children have already learned and to plan the next steps for improvement.

Special measures: monitoring of Moat Hall Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 13–14 February 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visiting 18 lessons; most with senior leaders, including the mathematics and English subject leaders. They analysed mathematics books for Years 1 to 6. They scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the Local Leader of Education from the partner school, Gorsemoor Primary School, and groups of pupils. They also spoke over the phone to a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit in November 2012, a member of staff has returned from maternity leave. The governing body has had a meeting with a representative from the academy's division of the Department for Education (DfE).

Achievement of pupils at the school

The major improvements to the quality of teaching and planned activities for children in the Nursery have continued so that now children are very well engaged in a wide variety of learning activities. These activities develop children's early writing, reading and counting skills and allow children to practise these skills in different areas, both indoors and outdoors. The school checks on how well the children are progressing and records this in good 'Learning Journeys'.

The progress of children in Reception continues to improve. The school has adapted its systems of tracking the progress of the children to take account of the new and revised national documents. These are used well to ensure that children progress and to identify what they need to do next.

The school has revised and improved the way it records and analyses the progress of pupils. This has meant that the school can identify any group or class who are not progressing in line with expectation. These records show that pupils are making much improved progress with reading and mathematics. The progress made in writing is not as good as other areas, with boys' writing being weaker than that of the girls. The school has responded by introducing ways to improve the quality of writing by developing speaking as a precursor to writing. This is still in its early stages of implementation and, as yet, has not impacted upon pupils' progress.

Pupils say that mathematics is now one of their favourite subjects. They enjoy topics that involve them in mathematical investigations. Lessons are planned to include

opportunities to develop their investigation and reasoning skills. Teaching assistants support groups well, including the most able, and they are aware of the aspect of mathematics the pupils should discover. Hence they are able to ask appropriate questions to let pupils make the connections for themselves.

The school has had support from the local authority to check on the needs of pupils who are identified as requiring additional support for their learning needs. Staff now take more responsibility for meeting the learning needs of these pupils within their classes.

The quality of artwork in the school is of a very high quality. Art is one of many subjects where mathematical skills have been introduced. This gives work greater relevance and allows pupils to see mathematics in a realistic way. For example, pupils consider symmetry when drawing Rangoli patterns, and use mathematical language to reproduce a Klee painting. Art is also used very well across variety of other subjects, for example using information and communication technology to design Mondrian images or designing Celtic Torcs as part of the work on the invasion of Britain by the Romans.

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

- improve provision in the Nursery class so that it meets the learning needs of the children and accelerates their progress – outstanding
- raise achievement and accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics – outstanding.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. More teaching is good, and teaching which is judged to require improvement is improving and getting closer to good. Staff respond well to advice and support on how to improve their teaching, and whole-school training is bringing about further improvements. The major reason why some teaching is better than others is because the best teaching allows pupils to work without too much teacher input and develops the pupils' understanding of the topic covered. In these lessons, learning is good or better.

Teachers who teach the same year group plan together so that work is better matched to the needs of the pupils and activities to extend the most able are identified, along with support for lower ability pupils. Planning the topics by the whole staff also makes sure that all subjects play an important part in each topic. For example, opportunities to use literacy and numeracy skills are included as well as ensuring that subjects like music are covered. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also identified. Lessons use appropriate

real-life examples; for example, looking at the energy used by the school and how this may be reduced as the school is working towards the highest eco award.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching continues to improve. Lessons include a variety of activities for children to follow, which are either child or adult led. Children make good use of the different areas within the classrooms, which give a rich and vibrant learning atmosphere. Nursery children can easily access the outdoor area and the school manages opportunities for Reception children to work outside. This is expected to be improved when the weather allows.

The school has analysed how well pupils are informed about what they are expected to do to be successful in lessons. Learning objectives are now better focused upon what pupils will learn and are rarely about task completion.

The school's analysis of marking shows that it is continuing to improve. There are more opportunities for pupils to look at each other's work and advise each other how it can be improved. Staff are giving more opportunities for pupils to respond to additional tasks when work has been marked. These tasks help pupils to overcome errors or misconceptions and extend pupils' learning.

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

- rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and relationships continue to be good. Pupils enjoy the clubs and were particularly keen to talk about the additional mathematics support they get in Year 6 when they attend the algebra club. Pupils take responsibility as mentors. They also act as buddies to a small group of young children who have difficulty playing nicely at lunchtime.

Attendance has improved. However, overall levels have fallen recently through a combination of poor attendance during times when other schools were closed because of snow and when a nasty bug made many pupils ill.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders continue to give the school drive and ambition. They are taking more responsibility for themselves and are less reliant upon support from the local authority or the partner school. This shows that the school's capacity to improve is getting stronger. Subject leadership is being extended to include more staff with responsibility for leading on subjects and to give additional support for mathematics. The revised curriculum is embedding well and senior leaders have evaluated the impact after the completion of the first topic.

Senior leaders responded well to areas of improvement identified in the previous visit and strengthened the school's approach to lesson observations and in analysing progress information. There is good support to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including that from local authority subject consultants and through visits to the partner school.

The post-Ofsted action plan is being continually evaluated and the school has identified a number of areas which it is now developing to bring about improvements; for example, boy's writing.

Members of the governing body have had training from the local authority and are now better able to challenge the school through its effective committees. Minutes from governor meetings better reflect this challenge.

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

- increase the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels – good.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support for the leadership of the school and the governing body. Staff have benefitted from working with the Local Leader in Education and other teachers from the partner school. Both the local authority and the Local Leader in Education have rightly recognised that the leadership of the school is far stronger and it requires less direct support.

The core group meetings have identified that the school has improved in the areas identified in the last inspection.