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7 March 2013

Mr Chris Pearce
Headteacher
Pickering Community Junior School
Middleton Road
Pickering
North Yorkshire
YO18 8AJ

Dear Mr Pearce

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Pickering Community Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 5 and 6 March 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 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 Corporate Director of Children's and Young Peoples' Service for North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler

Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012



Annex

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

- Raise attainment and improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics, especially for boys, those who are low-attaining, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are more able by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve each year and by the end of the key stage
 - implementing regular, focused teaching for those pupils who struggle with reading so that their skills in knowing letters and sounds are sufficient for them to write with confidence and access all other learning
 - ensuring all learning proceeds at an appropriate pace and pupils are actively involved in their own learning.

- Improve the use of assessment to ensure the quality of teaching is at least good by:
 - using accurate data on pupils' progress that identifies individual gaps in learning
 - using assessment information to provide tasks and activities that are specifically tailored to the needs of individual pupils and groups
 - assessing pupils as they learn so that teaching can be adapted quickly to respond to their needs
 - having a consistent, effective approach to marking and feedback
 - tracking pupils' progress, including that of significant groups, more frequently and set ambitious targets for what all pupils can achieve.

- Implement a consistent and effective approach to dealing with low-level disruption and poor behaviour.

- With immediate effect, address issues raised during this inspection to ensure that all pupils are fully safeguarded.

- Increase the impact of all leaders and managers, including the governing body, on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching by:
 - raising their expectations
 - developing their skills of monitoring and evaluation
 - adapting school development planning to focus on the areas that will make the greatest difference to pupils' achievement
 - refining subject action plans to include clear, measurable outcomes and well-defined timescales, so as to measure their impact effectively.

Special measures: monitoring of Pickering Community Junior School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 5 and 6 March 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives from the local authority.

Context

The headteacher at the time of the previous inspection left the school in April 2012. The local authority arranged for two acting headteachers to be seconded to the school to share the leadership until the end of the summer term 2012. They were followed by an experienced headteacher from within the authority who led the school until the end of the autumn term 2012. A permanent headteacher took up his appointment on 1 January 2013.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved in 2012 and was broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics needs to be improved as they do not compare favourably with the national average. Following the monitoring inspection in December 2012, it was noted that pupils were making better progress than they were at the time of the previous inspection. This remains the case and includes all groups including those with disabilities and special educational needs and those who are low attaining. It is supported by an analysis of school held data and the outcomes of lesson observations carried out during the inspection. Pupils are making better progress because the quality of teaching is improving and, as a result, the gap in attainment between all groups and those nationally is narrowing in both English and mathematics.

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

- raise attainment and improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics, especially for boys, those who are low attaining, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are more able – good.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teachers' planning has improved. Work is more closely matched to the ability of all pupils. Teachers are very clear as to what pupils are to learn and this drives their teaching. Teaching assistants are making a greater contribution to pupils' learning and this represents a big step forward. They are better informed as to what is expected of them and carry out activities that are much more focussed on enhancing pupils' progress. Training has

been provided to develop their knowledge of the teaching of mathematics and phonics (the relationship between letters and their sounds) and this is benefiting pupils, especially those receiving targeted support. Pupils are more involved in their learning and respond positively when questioned and challenged. They particularly enjoy mental mathematic sessions where the pace of teaching is high and learning is fun. A notable feature that has emerged since the previous inspection is that pupils are now keen to learn and they talk avidly about what they are doing during lessons. This is leading to the acquisition of good working habits that will serve them well as they continue their education. However, in some lessons, often in Year 3, pupils are not as focussed on learning as they could be. Their ability to work on their own and concentrate on their work is not yet as well established and this inhibits progress. The quality of marking in English and mathematics has improved significantly with clear evaluative comments and points for improvement. However, the quality and consistency in other subjects does not yet show the same rigour and regularity. Teachers are much more adept at identifying pupils' misconceptions during lessons and this is helping to ensure that work is better aligned to pupils' learning needs.

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

- improve the use of assessment to ensure the quality of teaching is at least good – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour has improved steadily since the previous inspection and it continues to do so. Pupils are more engaged during lessons because teachers are planning activities that capture and sustain their attention. As a result they apply themselves to their work and this promotes the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Behaviour during lessons has improved as a result. Teachers and teaching assistants have positive relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. The amount of low-level disruption and poor behaviour evident in the past has diminished noticeably. School leaders have dealt with all safeguarding issues raised in February 2012.

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

- implement a consistent and effective approach to dealing with low-level disruption and poor behaviour – good
- with immediate effect, address issues raised during the previous inspection to ensure that all pupils are fully safeguarded – good.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The new headteacher has successfully built on the effective work carried out by his predecessors. He has brought a clear vision and direction and this has been successfully communicated to all staff. Everyone is now working together and share one objective, to provide the best possible quality of education to all pupils. There is a very strong sense of teamwork and staff are working hard to bring about improvements. The headteacher has

high expectations of both pupils and staff. Teachers are responding positively to the changes introduced over the past few months, whether it is the reorganisation of phase leaders or the increased accountability of staff for the progress their pupils are making. It is abundantly clear that the pace of change has increased since January 2013 and this has been a good thing. However, leaders and governors are conscious that a balance must be maintained between the rate at which initiatives are implemented and time to allow changes to be embedded in the work of the school. Subject leaders in mathematics and English have received guidance and are developing the skills necessary to fulfil their management responsibilities. The governing body is acquiring a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A governing body's school performance and improvement committee has been established and meets every fortnight. This enables a small group of governors to monitor the work of the school and determine how actions contained in the school-improvement plan are making a difference to pupils' learning. The involvement of more members of the governing body in monitoring the work of the school remains a work in progress.

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

- increase the impact of all leaders and managers, including the governing body, on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching – good.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support to the school through the provision of training and reviews of progress in relation to the areas of improvement identified in the previous inspection report.