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13 May 2013

Mrs Jane Walker
Headteacher
Anston Brook Primary School
Ryton Road
North Anston
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S25 4DN

Dear Mrs Walker

Special measures monitoring inspection of Anston Brook Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 and 10 May 2013, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

This inspection was the third 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.

The school may be allowed to appoint one Newly Qualified Teacher.

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 Strategic Director, Children & Young People's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' progress accelerates and attainment rises by ensuring that:
 - the requirements of the national curriculum in English and mathematics are fully implemented so that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are comprehensively and progressively developed
 - work is well matched to the needs and prior attainment of all groups of pupils and is appropriately challenging for all
 - marking and feedback are regular and provide clear information for pupils on how well they are doing and how to improve their work so that they make swifter progress and reach their targets.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all leaders develop the range of knowledge and skills necessary to play a full role in monitoring the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility and in taking successful action to bring about improvement
 - all information about the effectiveness of the school, including how pupils are progressing, is analysed rigorously in order to identify what actions need to be taken to bring about improvement and which are then swiftly implemented
 - monitoring activities focus on assessing the impact of action taken to improve pupils' outcomes.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 May 2013

Evidence

The inspector observed all teachers jointly with the executive headteacher. He examined documents and met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and consultant headteachers from the local authority.

Context

One teacher has been absent since February 2013.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils are making improved progress. School data show Year 6 pupils have made faster progress than in their previous years. They have made particularly fast progress in writing over the last two terms. This is the result of highly focused teaching and extensive additional support for targeted pupils. However, the evidence suggests that Year 6 pupils have not yet made the average amount of progress expected over the key stage and their current attainment appears to be below the national average. In other years, the picture is brighter. Assessments for Year 2 to Year 5 indicate improved progress. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above or similar to the levels expected for their age. School analysis indicates that less progress has been made in Year 1. More-focused teaching of individuals and small groups has contributed to better progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils are making better progress because they are engaged in interesting and practical activities that stimulate their learning. They are enjoying their work, concentrating well and keen to improve. Pupils continue to be motivated by more-precise learning objectives, regular and more-accurate assessment as well as by marking and rewards for progress.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is more consistently good. Lessons are increasingly well planned and involve pupils actively in their learning, using a more varied range of imaginative and practical resources. Well-defined lesson objectives and success criteria are used consistently and increasingly well matched to the needs of individuals and groups. Marking that identifies the next steps in learning each day has helped to increase pupils' progress. Pupils welcome the new lesson time allocated to corrections and responses to the teachers' comments. Increased use is being made of educational visits and outdoor spaces to provide stimulating learning experiences. The more creative curriculum is promoting more-purposeful talking and thinking in solving mathematical problems and scientific investigation. Displays are providing more-effective guidance for pupils and creating a greater sense of pride in pupils' work. Standards of presentation have risen. Pupils are finding reading enjoyable more in the themed book corners.

The observed teaching of letters and sounds used effective techniques to involve pupils in sounding and blending letters in meaningful and engaging activities. The school is considering an alternative programme to enable more pupils to read competently by age six and to tackle continuing weaknesses in literacy at Key Stage 2 of those identified as having special educational needs. The school reports that more parents of pupils in the early years are listening to their children read as a result of more prompts from staff.

On occasion, stimulating activities are provided but the teaching does not draw sufficiently on pupils' ideas and responses, nor does it ensure that all pupils are fully engaged and working at a good pace. The school has acted effectively to minimise the impact of staff absence but it has affected the quality of teaching and learning in Year 1.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are increasingly well motivated by the clear direction provided in lessons, the greater range of activities and the regular rewards for achievement. Pupils continue to be well behaved in lessons and around the school and enjoy the more frequent opportunities for outdoor learning.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher, with clear vision and strong leadership, has established more rigorous routines which have increased the amount of good teaching and learning. However, not all teaching is good. A more frequent cycle of assessment and analysis has sharpened the precision of actions taken by senior and subject leaders and class teachers. Class teachers are taking more initiative in providing explanations and evidence in progress review meetings. The cycle of professional activities matches those in the partner school, which has enabled strong links to be made. Subject leaders and class teachers now work closely with staff in the partner school in a regular programme of planning, professional development and checking the accuracy of assessment. This work has contributed significantly to improvements in teaching and the curriculum. Educational visits by pupils are organised jointly, which provides pupils with wider experiences and greater value for money.

Subject leaders for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs are providing better leadership. They have adopted a shared and well-organised approach to monitoring and evaluation and have started to produce reports to a common format. The new leader for special educational needs has introduced finer assessments of pupils' needs, more rigorous analysis of individual needs and quicker action. Actions are being evaluated more critically and leaders have a clearer idea of what works. For example, the introduction of structured conversations with parents has led to more accurately targeted support activities for pupils. On the other hand, leaders have identified that pupils supported at the level of support known as school action, are not making enough progress in reading. The numeracy coordinator has begun to provide more feedback and direction to staff as a result of her analysis of test results, her checks on the consistency of teachers' planning and the quality of pupils' work. The literacy coordinator has taken a stronger lead in developing the teaching of letters and sounds and in checking assessment in English with the partner school.

The governing body has begun actively to consider how it can extend and develop the relationship with the partner school and its governing body in the longer term.

External support

Well-organised professional links with the partner school have contributed significantly to the school's improvement. Local authority headteacher consultants provide a helpful sounding board for the executive headteacher. They have reduced their support as improvement has become more secure. A local authority consultant provided effective support for developing the new leader of mathematics and this support has now reduced. The leader for special educational needs has also received effective support.