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13 December 2013

Mr Patrick Fielding and Mrs Sarah Fielding
Executive Headteachers
Claremont Primary and Nursery School
Claremont Road
Off Hucknall Road
Nottingham
NG5 1BH

Dear Mr Fielding and Mrs Fielding

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Claremont Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 13 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in October 2012. 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 the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham City.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - building effective working relationships between leaders and all staff, in order to promote a shared vision for the school's future improvement and to secure greater stability in staffing
 - ensuring that unfilled jobs in management, such as the post of special educational needs coordinator and staff responsible for key stages, are filled as soon as possible
 - establishing targets for staff to improve their work that are linked to specific training for each individual.

- Ensure that the school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, and informs high-quality improvement plans that include clear criteria against which success can be frequently and thoroughly checked and measured.

- Overhaul the approach to managing pupils' behaviour so that any sanctions for misbehaviour are proportionate and systems are followed by staff.

- Ensure that the governing body not only supports school leaders and managers but also makes them accountable for how well the school performs.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 13 December 2013

Evidence

The inspection focused on how well leaders are addressing all of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last full inspection. The inspection also focused on the extent to which the historic turbulence in leadership has had an impact on the quality of teaching, and on pupils' achievement.

During this inspection, the inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents including the school's improvement plans, data on pupils' progress and standards, leaders' records of teachers' performance, minutes from governing body meetings, and the school's single central record of staff suitability checks. Meetings were held with the head of school and the executive headteachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, and other school leaders. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. Informal conversations took place with parents and carers on the school playground, as they brought their children to school.

The inspector observed teaching in three lessons, taught by three teachers. All of these lessons were seen jointly with the head of school. The inspector also visited other lessons for short periods of time to check work in pupils' books and observe pupils' behaviour.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the Chair of the Governing Body has stepped down from his role. A new Chair has been elected, and two new governors have also joined the governing body. No teachers have left the school, and one teacher has returned from long-term absence through illness. The working hours of the inclusion leader have been increased and she now works on a full-time, rather than part-time, basis.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The executive headteachers and the head of school have continued to work determinedly to try to improve the school since the last monitoring visit. They have been successful in doing so. They have prioritised their time and used their considerable expertise to focus sharply on improving the quality of teaching. The work of each teacher has been carefully monitored by senior leaders. The information gathered from this monitoring has been used to set development targets for each teacher, which are shared with the teacher and reviewed on a monthly basis. Senior leaders ensure that the improvement targets are realistic and achievable, and they are underpinned by programmes of training and support for individuals where required. As a result of this process, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils are making better progress in most classes.

The improved knowledge and skills of governors mean that they are now less reliant on reports from senior leaders to inform them about the school's work. Governors have attended training to help them to improve their skills in analysing data about pupils' progress. They have also made more frequent, focused visits to check the work of the school for themselves. However, the visits are mostly undertaken by a small group of governors, so the skills of other governors are not fully utilised. The governing body continues to challenge leaders effectively. For example, governors have identified that there may be some inconsistencies in the school's approach to setting homework in different classes, and are working with leaders to explore this further.

Leaders at all levels continue to rigorously and accurately evaluate the performance of the school. This has enabled them to effectively identify priorities for improving it. Leaders have worked with staff to produce comprehensive action plans to outline how the improvement priorities will be addressed. Leaders recognise that the turbulence in leadership and strained relationships between staff have had an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in some classes.

The 2013 results, which are still undergoing final checks, show that although the proportions of pupils making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics were above national averages, the proportions making expected progress were below average. The achievement of different groups of pupils over time and in the autumn term 2013 in most year groups, including the current Year 6, is much better. This includes pupils supported through the pupil premium.

The school's systems to manage pupils' behaviour continue to be consistently effective. Pupils are motivated to focus on the school's core values of achievement, community and effort. The single central record accurately records the checks made on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers working with children.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Staff morale remains high. Discussions with teachers and teaching assistants indicate that they continue to feel valued and well supported by leaders. They also say that leaders communicate their ideas and information about the day-to-day running of the school clearly and regularly. This, combined with effective training, is helping staff to become more confident in their approach, and is supporting better stability in staffing.
- The school is working well with partner schools, including a school recently judged to be outstanding by Ofsted, to share practice to improve the quality of teaching, and leadership and management. This has also supported work to begin to prepare for a revised school curriculum from September 2014.
- The head of school, effectively supported by the executive headteachers, is quickly growing in confidence. Discussions with parents and carers indicate that

they have full faith in the school's leadership team, and are impressed with how quickly the school is improving.

- The inclusion leader is playing a key role in helping teachers and teaching assistants to better support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. She also keeps a close check on the progress that this group of pupils is making, to help ensure that they do not fall behind.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders are not doing enough to improve pupils' attendance, which remains below the national average. Attendance in 2012/13 was better than in the previous year. However, the gap is not being closed quickly enough. Extended absences, often due to the celebration of religious festivals, make a significant impact on the school's overall attendance figures.
- Teaching assistants are becoming increasingly skilled and were observed making a good contribution to learning during the monitoring visit. However, on some occasions, teachers over-rely on teaching assistants, and do not check the work of the pupils they are working with frequently enough in lessons.
- Not all pupils in Year 6 are able to rapidly recall multiplication facts. They should be able to do this. Although it says in the school's own list of 'non-negotiable requirements' that pupils in upper Key Stage 2 should know multiplication facts, it does not state what 'know' means. Consequently, some pupils are able to recall multiplication facts instantly but many others are not. During the monitoring visit, the progress of a small group of pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on fractions was slowed considerably because they could not recall multiplication facts rapidly.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support for the school, and this is greatly appreciated by senior leaders. An officer has worked alongside senior leaders to help check the quality of teaching and confirm that leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. School leaders are also grateful to the local authority's pupil admissions team for providing them with information about pupils who are due to begin the school at an earlier stage, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This has given staff more time to consider how they can best support and meet the needs of these pupils before they begin at the school.