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31 January 2014

Mrs Helen Headleand
Headteacher
Bramley Sunnyside Junior School
Flanderwell Lane
Bramley
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S66 3QW

Dear Mrs Headleand

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bramley Sunnyside Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 29 and 30 January 2014, 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.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2013. 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 not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 January 2013

- Eliminate inadequate teaching and improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 to good or better in mathematics and English in order that pupils make at least good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers keep their introductions to lessons brief so that pupils are more active and attentive in their learning
 - teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are going to learn and know what steps they need to take to be successful
 - teachers' questioning skills are developed further so that they can fully probe and challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - teachers' expectations are raised so that pupils produce and present high quality writing in all subjects
 - teachers are given the opportunity to observe good and outstanding practice and learn from it
 - teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils' learning.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve by:
 - developing the skills of the subject leaders so they can be fully effective in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects in order to raise pupils' achievement
 - ensuring that all school action plans are specific about what the final outcome will look like and include interim measures within an agreed timeframe, so that governors and other leaders can rigorously monitor the progress made
 - ensuring that lessons across a range of subjects offer real-life opportunities that meet the needs and interests of all pupils, particularly those known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
 - ensuring that governors receive training so they are clear about their roles and responsibilities and can help to drive school improvement very quickly
 - developing governors' understanding of the school's data so they can ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account
 - involving governors in deciding the allocation of pupil premium funding and monitoring its impact.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 29 to 30 January 2014.

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work with the headteacher, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

The deputy headteacher went on long-term sickness leave in October 2013. In January 2014, two temporary teachers replaced a full-time and a part-time teacher who left at the end of the autumn term.

Achievement of pupils at the school

National comparative data about the 2013 test results at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that attainment improved from below average to average. This was mainly because it was an above-average ability year group. However, attainment in grammar, spelling and punctuation was significantly below average. Attainment by low, middle and high ability groups was below average when compared with the same ability groups nationally. Compared with 2012, there was no improvement in the progress made by Year 6 from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. Rates of progress remained exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with 2012, pupils made more progress in mathematics but less progress in reading. Very few made three levels of progress from their starting points at Key Stage 1, compared with the national average.

School assessment data shows current pupils are making better progress. Pupils generally made good progress in the first term of this school year. In the autumn term, pupils made expected or better progress in mathematics, reading and writing in all year groups, including Year 3. However, last term's progress in reading in Year 4 was weaker.

The amount of progress made from the end of Key Stage 1 is reaching the national average in Year 6 and getting closer in Year 4 and Year 5. Year 6 pupils made faster progress when they were in Year 5 and they are continuing at this rate in Year 6. Current data shows that, compared to their starting points, Year 6 pupils have overcome past underachievement and are currently making expected progress in mathematics and more than expected progress in reading and writing. Year 5 pupils have caught up in reading but are still behind in writing and the boys are behind in mathematics. Year 4 pupils are behind in mathematics and writing. The headteacher expects all year groups to have caught up by the end of this year.

The quality of teaching

Pupils are making better progress because more teaching is good and there is now some outstanding teaching. Some aspects of teaching continue to require improvement and a small amount is inadequate.

In stronger teaching, teachers engage pupils well by providing an imaginative stimulus related to the year group topic. Learning in one lesson builds firmly on the previous lesson and the pupils know what they are trying to achieve. The skills pupils are learning are explained clearly and pupils know how to succeed. Teachers are energetic and their personality engages and motivates pupils. The sequence of tasks is better planned and the tasks enable all pupils to work and make progress. Questioning is used more effectively to check understanding and explain things that are not clear and to involve the full range of pupils. In an outstanding lesson, pupils' strong emotional engagement with a poem led to high quality poetic writing. Teaching assistants' questioning and explanations better enable individual pupils and small groups to keep pace with the learning.

In occasional weaker teaching, the mathematical task is too low level or too hard because the steps in learning have not been broken down clearly. The teacher is sometimes slow to spot and act on errors during lessons. On a few occasions, whiteboards are used for drafting writing which leads to unnecessary copying. Lack of clarity in the objectives for the next stage of writing sometimes slows progress.

The teaching of writing has improved because teachers have adopted new methods and a common approach. The introduction of new writing books with lined paper with guides for the size of letters has improved the standard of presentation in all year groups. Pupils' handwriting has improved and provides a better basis for correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar. Teachers more consistently provide examples of high-level writing as a model for pupils to learn from. This has raised expectations and provides a challenging and practical example to emulate. Writing is more purposeful and increasingly well-produced learning resources provide pupils with practical steps for writing tasks. Learning walls have been developed which provide helpful references and examples for pupils to follow.

The quality of assessment has improved. Folders have been set up for every pupil to document their writing in a range of genres. Assessment of writing provides more systematic documentation of skills, levels and dates. Marking more consistently provides specific feedback on what skill has been achieved and the next step. The quality of marking and feedback has been enhanced by the introduction of a 'fix it' session in English and mathematics where pupils respond to teachers' corrections, questions and challenges about their work. The marking of grammar, spelling and punctuation is more rigorous and pupils more frequently review and correct their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are well motivated by the new rewards system which has been implemented in all classes. They are keen to achieve the rewards and say that they cannot afford to miss a day in case they slip down the chart. Attendance is higher at this time of the school year than in the previous two years. Pupils value the techniques that teachers now use to quieten the class and they feel they are getting on with their work better. One or two classes would like more of these techniques to be used in their class.

Pupils are showing greater pride in their written work and in the experiences they have had, for example, the Tudor Day and Viking Village visit. They are more enthusiastic to show visitors their work. A large number of pupils enjoy the out-of-school clubs in sports, arts, cookery, computers and media, which have increased in popularity.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher's drive, determination and high expectations are continuing to motivate staff and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Her systematic approach to increasing the consistency of good teaching and learning is paying dividends. The implementation of common and non-negotiable approaches to classroom organisation, display, lesson planning and assessment has raised standards overall. This has been well supported by professional development and learning visits to other schools. Regular, accurate lesson observation has identified strengths and weaknesses and coaching has been provided for individual teachers. This has had some success in bringing about improvements, but a few weaknesses remain. Some middle leaders are receiving coaching in order to carry out their role with a sharper focus.

The introduction of a better structured and more creative curriculum has raised the quality of work in other subjects, especially in art and design. Pupils value the wider range of stimulating visits which add meaning to their work.

The literacy leader, supported by the assistant headteacher, has improved the teaching of writing. She has carefully checked the implementation of new methods and challenged elements of inconsistency. Reading is a priority for next term. A reading challenge to encourage greater stamina and interest in reading for pleasure has had a positive response. Booster classes are improving the progress of some targeted pupils. The teaching of guided reading is under review and links have been made with local schools to identify strategies to accelerate progress in reading.

The roles and responsibilities of the absent deputy headteacher who was leading mathematics have recently been taken over by another member of staff who is overseeing the improvement plan. A new software programme for mathematics has extended opportunities for homework. The school has identified that pupils' strong interest in computer programming and graphics could make a valuable contribution to the mathematics curriculum.

The inclusion leader works closely with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and to review provision. A new procedure has been introduced to assess personal and social development more accurately. New resources provide better support for dyslexic pupils to improve their handwriting and to compose their stories.

Governors are well informed about the progress made by pupils. Training for governors has increased their understanding of data. They have scrutinised the spending and impact of pupil premium funding in more detail and have asked for improvements in certain year groups where the impact has been limited. They have worked closely with the headteacher and the local authority to find resolutions to staffing issues.

External support

The local authority has provided helpful advice in tackling staffing issues. A local leader of education and a consultant headteacher from the local authority have begun to provide coaching for some middle leaders and teachers. Links with a local school have been used effectively to develop the teaching of writing. The school benefits from local authority support and advice for work with pupils with special educational needs, including autism.