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Claire Peat
Headteacher
Castle View Primary School
School Road
Matlock
DE4 3DS

Dear Mrs Peat

Special measures monitoring inspection of Castle View Primary School

Following my visit with Malcolm Johnstone, Additional Inspector to your school on 26–27 February 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 taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement 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 not making enough 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 Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching to a good standard and raise pupils' achievement to at least the level expected of their age by:
 - improving lesson planning so that all pupils are set work that moves their learning forward at a good pace
 - increasing teachers' expectations of what different pupils can achieve, especially the more able
 - ensuring that teachers use accurate assessment information to keep a close check on pupils' progress and act swiftly to help anyone falling behind
 - adapting teaching as lessons unfold to respond to the learning needs and strengths of all pupils
 - improving marking so that pupils are clear about what they need to do next to aim high.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - checking the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning at regular intervals and taking the necessary action to ensure it is at least good
 - ensuring that pupils' progress is regularly and accurately assessed and that this information is used by managers to check on teachers' performance
 - developing the role of the senior leadership team so that it provides effective support to the headteacher in making improvements
 - ensuring that the school development plan includes sufficiently rigorous targets and that actions bring about timely and sustained improvement
 - improving the effectiveness of the governing body in challenging school leaders and holding them to account for their work
 - undertaking an external review of governance to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 26–27 February 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including lessons, some of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders and groups of pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the governing body and advisers from the local authority. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised and informal discussions were held with parents.

Context

There have been no important contextual changes since the previous monitoring inspection in November 2013.

Achievement of pupils at the school

At the time of the last section 5 inspection, progress was inadequate from Year 1 to Year 6, and standards were too low in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress that pupils currently make remains inadequate. Too many pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making little or no progress in writing and mathematics. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2. Observations in lessons, the school's own data and the analysis of the work in books confirm that pupils are not making sufficient progress in these subjects.

The introduction of carefully planned guided reading sessions is starting to have an impact on the progress pupils make in reading. This is particularly the case for pupils in Year 5, who have made rapid gains in reading over the last term. However, teaching is still not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress and close the gaps in their learning. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length or for different purposes. Too much of their work in Key Stage 2 consists of writing short pieces of prose. As a result, they do not apply or demonstrate their knowledge of writing often enough. Their technical writing skills, including their spelling and the use of grammar, are frequently weak and teachers are not enabling them to improve these rapidly enough.

Similarly, progress in mathematics remains poor across the school. School data show that standards remain stubbornly low. Work in books shows that teachers' planning is not enabling pupils to deepen their understanding of this subject. In some cases, the work set is too easy and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to apply new knowledge to increasingly difficult problems. In other cases, teachers do not adapt their planning to account for pupils who have struggled with their work. As a result, progress over time remains inadequate for many pupils.

The quality of teaching

There have been some improvements to the quality of teaching. Teachers help each other to understand the significant gaps in pupils' learning and to plan lessons that will help to overcome them. Inspectors particularly noted their willingness to engage in professional dialogue with each other and with external advisers. They share a common determination to improve their own practice and to raise standards. However, they lack the expertise and the skills needed to rapidly address the learning needs of their pupils. Some teaching remains inadequate and very little is consistently good. Because of this, pupils continue to make inadequate progress.

Teachers plan their lessons following a shared strategy of 'learning steps'. These are designed to build challenge in each lesson and to encourage pupils to strive to reach the more challenging 'steps'. However, planning to build knowledge and skills over a series of lessons is weak and therefore individual lessons frequently fail to address the actual learning needs of pupils. Some 'steps' are not sufficiently challenging for more-able pupils, while less-able pupils follow the same 'step' as their peers and consequently, they continue to make less progress than they should.

Assessment information is now more accurate; teachers have a broad understanding of the level that pupils are working at. However, they do not have sufficient skills to use this information to plan effectively to make up for the deficiencies in pupils' learning. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised but are still not high enough, particularly given the scale of improvement needed. There is greater consistency in the quality of marking and feedback in books. Pupils are increasingly receiving detailed guidance on how to improve their work. However, teachers do not always make sure pupils respond to this feedback by practising and improving different aspects of their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

This aspect of the school was not addressed in any depth during this inspection as it was not a concern in July. However, inspectors observed that pupils are, on the whole, positive about learning and cooperate well with each other and with adults. The school's strategy of using 'steps to learning' in lessons encourages many pupils to engage quickly in learning, and to want to take on more challenging work. Pupils behave well out of lessons, including during break and lunch times. Their attendance has improved markedly over the last term and is now above the average for primary schools. This reflects how much they enjoy being in school.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is an inspirational role model for the teaching staff to follow and parents, staff and children all agree that she is a significant strength in the school.

The headteacher regularly checks on the quality of teaching, both through direct observation and through the scrutiny of pupils' work. She gives teaching staff detailed advice and arranges opportunities for them to learn from good practice elsewhere. She has worked closely with the local authority's school adviser to coach her senior leaders and ensure they are increasingly able to support her in making improvements. For example, the lower school leader has directly overseen improvements in teaching in Key Stage 1 and the special educational needs coordinator now has a robust plan for improving the achievement of these pupils, although it is yet to have an impact. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are now accurate and this has created a shared sense of urgency and responsibility for improvement.

Despite these improvements, the headteacher recognises that teaching is not improving quickly enough. Additional support has been organised to improve lesson planning in Key Stage 2. However, this is still not sufficient to have the immediate impact needed to rapidly improve pupils' learning.

Governors continue to work closely with the headteacher and to have forthright conversations about the improvements that are needed. Governors commissioned an external review of their effectiveness following the section 5 inspection. However, an unacceptable delay in them receiving any resulting advice and guidance has hampered their ability to understand how they can best improve the challenge and support they offer to school leaders.

External support

Following the last monitoring inspection in November, the local authority acted swiftly to increase the support to the school and to the headteacher. It has arranged external support from leaders and practitioners from other local schools. The school improvement adviser has worked closely with the headteacher to monitor teaching and to improve the effectiveness of senior leaders. This support is starting to have a positive impact, for example on the developments to planning in Key Stage 2, although it is too soon for this to have had a noticeable effect on standards.