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20 February 2014

Mrs Pamela Smith
Headteacher
Grenoside Community Primary School
Norfolk Hill
Grenoside
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S35 8QB

Dear Mrs Smith

Special measures monitoring inspection of Grenoside Community Primary School

Following my visit with Jennifer Lawrence, Additional Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 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 which have been 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 June 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 appoint one newly qualified teacher in either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Sheffield.

PROTECT-INSPECTION



Yours sincerely

John Coleman

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to be good or better in order to ensure at least good achievement for all groups of pupils by:
 - ensuring teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils should achieve
 - matching work to meet the needs of all pupils so that all achieve as well as they should
 - providing pupils with sufficient opportunities in lessons to learn for themselves
 - making sure teachers always make clear through their marking what pupils need to do to improve their work and give them sufficient opportunities to reflect and act on this advice.

- Urgently improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels to be at least good in order to rapidly improve the school's performance by making sure that:
 - all leaders are sufficiently skilled and effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' progress throughout the school
 - leaders help teachers to better understand how to use performance data to ensure teaching accurately matches pupils' learning needs
 - subject leaders are given sufficient time and opportunity to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects and report their findings regularly to the governing body
 - the school's development plan contains clear, measurable targets for success that are reported regularly to the governing body
 - teachers' performance targets are closely linked to outcomes for pupils within a rigorous system of performance management that is closely monitored by the governing body
 - an external review of governance is carried out to find out how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved
 - governors have a good understanding of data about pupils' performance so that they can hold school leaders fully to account for this
 - leaders address concerns parents have about their child's performance.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 February 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, parents, the Interim Executive Board and a representative from the local authority. Lessons were observed in every year group.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, an Interim Executive Board (IEB) has been established to provide strategic governance to the school. The IEB includes members with significant experience of governance in schools causing concern, together with parent representatives. Meetings are held weekly with school leaders and the IEB also meets regularly with the local authority and communicates with the Department for Education. Several changes to staffing have taken place including the departure of two teachers and two teaching assistants. Three new teaching assistants have been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

During the autumn term, published national data shows that the standards reached by pupils in the school fell in the school year 2012/13. This continues a downward trend evidenced in recent years and highlighted in the school's last full inspection report. In particular, the data reveal that the progress made by pupils in mathematics in Key Stage 2 was below the national average. School data analysed during this monitoring inspection show that pupils' attainment is beginning to improve. The progress made by pupils varies significantly across the school in classes, year groups and in different subjects. The progress made by pupils in mathematics is not as good as the progress in reading and writing. Taken overall, during the current school year, the data show that around half of pupils are making good progress and are improving their attainment relative to their age. Consequently, there are about 50% of pupils who are not making enough progress. Notably, pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, and who generally attain lower standards, are making much better progress than their peers and are starting to significantly close the gap. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to all pupils. The work seen in pupils' books and observations made by inspectors in lessons, show that there is significant variation in the progress made by pupils in lessons and confirms the evidence from school data that progress in mathematics is weakest.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving in some areas but not in others. Due to the actions of school leaders, especially the headteacher, the quality of teachers'

planning is much more sharply focused on pupils' learning. Plans detail the starting points for groups of pupils and outline the level of attainment at which different work is pitched. There is greater consistency to the format used for planning and good collaboration between teachers ensures equal opportunities for pupils in different classes divided according to attainment or age. Teachers' marking has also improved and is more consistent across the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and combined with pupils' positive attitudes to school contribute effectively to pupils getting the most from what is offered most of the time. However, teaching is too often not good enough.

Teacher's expectations for pupils' progress in lessons are too low and this needs urgently addressing. Pupils recap on existing skills and knowledge through repetitive tasks which in some lessons is unnecessary as it does not help their learning. There is poor management of time. For example, the first lesson of the day was observed to start more than 15 minutes late due to time taken as pupils transferred from one classroom to the next. This disjoints the start of the lesson and distracts pupils from concentrating quickly. Checks made by teachers in some lessons are not followed up to correct mistakes, reinforce teaching points and to ensure all pupils have a full understanding. As a result, these pupils have gaps in their learning. Overall, there is insufficient direct teaching of knowledge and skills. Pupils are often engaged in tasks and activities which keep them occupied, but the pace of learning and progress is hindered by a shortage of good teaching. Teachers' explanations are sometimes unclear or repeated so that pupils' interest wanes. Attempts to offer pupils choices so that they can select more challenging work is well intended, but insufficient guidance from teachers can lead to unhelpful decisions being taken by pupils. This means that the work chosen is too easy or too difficult.

Most of the teaching seen during this monitoring inspection requires improvement. Some good teaching was observed and also some inadequate teaching. This profile matches closely with the outcomes of a local authority review of teaching which took place a few days prior to the inspection. Consequently, while some improvements to teaching are evident, there remains much more to be done before pupils make the progress needed so that they all reach the standards of which they are capable.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Due to a greater emphasis upon the importance of pupils making a full attendance, there is evidence of much improvement in this area. Parents have received information from the school reminding them of the need for pupils to attend school regularly and of the legal requirements placed upon schools. New electronic systems for registration and lateness have increased the rigour of monitoring. Visitors to school are also checked more closely. Systems in school to encourage attendance and punctuality have been reviewed. Parents say they are very aware of the school's efforts to improve attendance. Several policies have been recently reviewed following an audit by the IEB. These include safeguarding procedures and a new

policy for e-safety. The improved policies are more readily available on a newly designed and improved school web-site.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The governance of the school is significantly improving due to the introduction of the IEB. The board have quickly audited the school's priorities and deployed their skills to each area in a structured way. They have recognised the school's need to urgently address the points for improvement identified at the last full Ofsted inspection. The IEB have also included a focus on the core responsibilities around safeguarding, financial management and the considerations for conversion to academy status. They have increased the degree of accountability to which school leaders are held. With the headteacher, the IEB are ensuring more robust arrangements for the performance management of all staff, and significantly, a far greater emphasis within this process on the progress made by pupils in their academic learning.

The ambition of the headteacher is shown by her strong advocacy for improvement in all areas of the school's work. She has introduced a new data tracking system which is improving the accuracy of progress measures and is ensuring the IEB and other school leaders are better placed to challenge and support the school. Improved planning and marking by teachers are early signs of the impact of leaders' efforts to improve the quality of teaching, though much remains to be done. Middle leader roles and responsibilities have been revised and clarified. They are now given sufficient time for their roles so that their monitoring is beginning to develop and inform the school's evaluation of improvements. Staff training has been provided regarding e-safety, data tracking and opportunities have been provided for teachers to visit other schools and observe good and outstanding practice. Parents say that they are much better informed about their child's attainment and progress through improved communication. Helpful leaflets about pupils' targets, interim reports about pupils' progress and parents' meetings attended by the IEB are examples of this.

External support

External support provided by the local authority has made a good contribution to the school's steady improvement. The local authority has successfully brokered several opportunities for staff to visit local schools to observe best practice. The local authority officer linked to the school has carried out a detailed review of the school's performance and she is in regular contact with the headteacher offering support and guidance. Also, the local authority meets with the IEB to evaluate the school's progress.