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2 April 2014

Mark Eadon
Holly Hill Primary and Nursery School
Off Portland Road
Selston
Nottingham
NG16 6AW

Dear Mr Eadon

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Holly Hill Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 1 April 2014, 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 May 2013. 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, the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Susan Barkway
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by making sure that teachers:
 - spend less time on lengthy explanations so that pupils have more time to practise skills and more-able pupils move on to demanding work earlier in lessons
 - consistently provide activities that interest and inspire pupils consistently demand that pupils work with care, and complete the tasks they are set have the opportunity to learn from the outstanding practice that exists in the school.

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - improving the use of reading diaries
 - using marking more effectively in mathematics to let pupils know how to improve their work
 - providing more planned opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving skills
 - monitoring the progress of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, and taking immediate action if this shows support is not fully effective.

- Improve the impact of leaders and managers, including the governing body by:
 - making sure that leaders focus with greater precision on the impact of teaching on learning, particularly of those pupils supported by pupil premium funding
 - making sure that the school's website is fully operational and complies with current requirements providing better information for parents about their children's progress.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 1 April 2014

Evidence

The inspection focused on improvements to the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1.

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The inspector observed four parts of lessons in Key Stage 1, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher and interim deputy headteacher. She also visited an assembly and carried out a learning walk to observe the teaching of letters and sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In addition, the inspector reviewed pupils' work in books, scrutinised school documentation on the progress being made by pupils, and looked carefully at the school's central record of checks on staff.

Context

Since the last inspection, a part-time special educational needs coordinator has been appointed, who took up post in January 2014. There have been no other significant changes.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders and managers are working to secure school improvements. They are using data well to identify strengths in the school's approach, as well as to ensure that any areas where progress is slower are followed up quickly. For example, they identified that progress in mathematics is slower than in reading and writing, and have introduced strategies to rapidly accelerate the progress being made by pupils in all year groups. This has included the appointment of an additional teacher to support teaching in mathematics, setting into ability groups so that teaching can be more focused to the level at which the pupils are working, and the development of mathematics clubs to provide opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills. As a result, progress is improving rapidly and almost all pupils are on track to make the expected two levels of progress in Key Stage 2, with a significant proportion on track to make better than expected progress. Similarly, a review of the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) has resulted in a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics, more rigorous assessment of the progress pupils are making and a significant increase in the proportion of pupils working at, or above, age-related expectations.

The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is improving, although it is not yet consistently good or better. Lessons are generally well planned and teachers usually include a range of activities, which engage pupils and provide opportunities for them to use and apply their learning. In most cases, teaching assistants are used

effectively and provide good support to groups of pupils. However, teachers do not always use their assessments well enough to enable them to adapt their lessons to ensure that pupils fully understand what is expected of them. When this happens, too many pupils are off task and learning is slowed. Nevertheless, work in pupils' books provides evidence that they are now making better progress in Key Stage 1 because of improvements this year in the quality of teaching.

Governors have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. For example, a programme of link governors for curriculum areas is now embedded and is ensuring that governors are very much involved in monitoring the work of the school. Governors use data on pupil progress to identify areas of concern and are increasingly holding the school to account. They work closely with the senior leadership team to ensure that there is a strategic approach to school development and that targets for improvement are being met.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The school is carefully monitoring the progress made by different groups of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority, and children who have a parent in the armed forces). Senior leaders have a much better understanding of the impact of interventions and, as a result, current data show that the gap between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and other pupils in the school is narrowing.
- A programme of training and support for teachers, including coaching and opportunities to observe good and outstanding practice, is helping to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Marking in books has improved. Teachers mark books regularly and identify what pupils have done well and what they need to do next to improve their work further. Pupils are frequently given the opportunity to respond to the marking and, as a result, have a greater understanding of how they can make their work better.
- Pupils take care over their work and presentation in books is good.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Assessments of progress and gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always used well by individual teachers to identify and plan next steps in learning.
- The school needs to ensure that expectations are consistently high and the relentless drive to secure rapid improvements are maintained. For example, although there is a school uniform, the school does not encourage all pupils to adhere to it.

External support

The local authority continues to provide a good level of support to the school. Regular reviews are helping to ensure that progress against milestones is monitored and next steps are identified. The support from teaching schools, brokered by the local authority, has also been beneficial in providing additional training for teachers and opportunities for joint moderation and levelling of pupils' work. As a result, assessments are accurate and data on pupils' progress is reliable.