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29 April 2014

Mrs Paula Bennett
Headteacher
Berkeley Junior School
Marsden Drive
Scunthorpe
Lincolnshire
DN15 8AH

Dear Mrs Bennett

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Berkeley Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 29 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in October 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 weakness designation. I recommend that the next inspection be a full section 5 reinspection.

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 for People for North Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm

Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better in order to raise standards and improve achievement in mathematics, especially for pupils with special educational needs and the most-able pupils, by:
 - eliminating all inadequate teaching ensuring that the tasks given to pupils match their ability
 - ensuring all pupils have appropriate levels of challenge, especially in mathematics and particularly for the most-able pupils
 - ensuring all teaching assistants are used effectively throughout the lesson to support pupils' learning
 - developing and improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills
 - ensuring all teachers have a good subject knowledge in mathematics
 - giving teachers more opportunities to observe good and outstanding practice within and beyond the school
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use practical contexts in which to solve problems in mathematics
 - allowing pupils to use the practical resources that are available to support their learning in mathematics as and when they need them.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - giving pupils greater opportunities to be more active and take the initiative in their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn independently and with others.
- Improve leadership and management to be good or better by ensuring:
 - subject leaders have the skills needed to monitor teaching in their subjects and that they do so regularly and rigorously in order to improve its quality
 - the school development plan shows how its focused activities are intended to impact on pupils' achievement and includes short-term targets to hold leaders to account for improving the school's performance
 - leaders regularly check how well pupils with special educational needs have progressed after taking part in a specific learning programme.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 29 April 2014

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. The inspector observed five lessons jointly with a senior member of staff. During lessons he looked at pupils' books and other work.

Context

A Year 4 teacher has left the school and been replaced, on a temporary basis, with a supply teacher. A permanent replacement will be appointed from September 2014. The governing body has continued to explore options for the future organisation of the school but no firm decisions have been taken.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The headteacher and staff have continued to make rapid improvements in the areas identified by the section 5 inspection. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching have been established well and the quality of teaching has improved markedly. Other policies and procedures which were new at the time of the inspection are now similarly firmly embedded in the school's normal practices. This is clearly evident in the improvement in pupils' performance in mathematics as demonstrated by detailed tracking and progress data presented by the school. The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved rapidly and, although there remain some inconsistencies in approach by different teachers, the overall trend of improvement is marked from the previous monitoring visit. Similar improvements in the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills, noted during the last monitoring inspection, have been consolidated and established in all subjects. However, there is still some inconsistency in the way spelling and grammatical errors are corrected by some teachers.

Subject leaders are confident in analysing the school's robust assessment data on pupil progress and this has helped them, and other teachers, to create stimulating lessons which enable pupils to learn effectively and make good progress. Close attention to the learning requirements of those pupils with special educational needs and those who are identified as being more able, has led to the improved performance of these groups of pupils. This progress has been helped by the good support provided by teaching assistants who are now employed well in lessons to

support both the less able and more able pupils. Pupils say that they cannot think of anything their teachers could do differently to make their lessons even more enjoyable than they already are!

The governing body continues to provide good support for the school. Governors are trained in key aspects of their roles and they make regular visits to classrooms and meet with staff about school developments. The governing body is kept well informed by the headteacher about school improvements. It finds the regular pupil progress meetings with the local authority especially useful and it values the work of the school's improvement partner in helping to keep the school under review. As a consequence of its support, and the good relationship it has established with the headteacher, the governing body has effectively challenged the school to make the improvements now clearly discernible in the school's performance data and classroom practice. It also continues to hold discussions about the future organisation of the school, although no firm plans have yet been agreed.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and this has enabled the senior team, and other leaders in the school, to grow in confidence and to press forward with great determination with their improvement programme. As a result, it is clear that all groups of pupils are making much better progress than at the time of the section 5 inspection.
- Improvements have been most marked in mathematics where strong leadership and better teaching have enabled pupils to be more engaged with their learning and more confident in exploring different ways to solve problems.
- The assessment information is detailed and has helped teachers to sharpen their focus on the performance of different groups of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs but also those who are more able. As a consequence, the performance of both these groups has improved since the previous monitoring inspection.
- Monitoring has also been extended well to embrace the scrutiny of pupils' books so that work is better presented and errors in writing are picked up quickly and corrected.
- Mentoring of staff who require support to improve their practice has been successful and local authority reviews of teaching have indicated how teaching generally is now much better than it was. The joint lesson observations undertaken during the monitoring inspection confirmed the school's own judgements about the better quality of teaching.
- Lessons are stimulating and well managed by teachers, so that pupils are fully engaged in their activities and incidences of poor behaviour no longer disrupt the flow of learning.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- While the challenge in lessons is appropriate for different groups of pupils in mathematics and literacy, it is less clear that this is so in all other subjects.

- The quality of teachers' marking has improved, but there are inconsistencies in the way different teachers interpret the school's expectations about marking across the curriculum.
- The school undertakes many activities and teaches many aspects relating to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but these are not brought together in a coherent and clear programme which can be evaluated easily in terms of the impact on pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' past work has been saved for reference purposes but this archive work is not currently used to demonstrate clearly how improvements to the quality and standard of work undertaken have changed over time as a consequence of specific initiatives or interventions.

External support

The local authority provides excellent support for the school. The work of the school's improvement partner has helped the headteacher to push forward rapidly with improvements to monitoring and tracking. School progress meetings with the local authority have also helped the school to make rapid improvements in its practices. Training for the governing body and for other staff on aspects of school improvement has been valued highly. Together, this support has helped the headteacher to demonstrate with confidence that the capacity of the school to continue to improve, in a self-sustaining way, has developed strongly since the section 5 inspection.