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3 July 2014

Mr John Maxwell
Headteacher
Bourne Primary School
Melbourne Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 8BD

Dear Mr Maxwell

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bourne Primary School

Following my visit with David Webster, additional inspector, to your school on 1 and 2 July, 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 May 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for East Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise the quality of teaching to at least good and so raise pupils' achievement, especially for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, by making sure that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve, and challenge them to work hard
 - teachers spend more time in lessons checking that pupils are making enough progress and adapting their teaching accordingly
 - teachers mark books regularly and in a way that allows pupils to understand what they need to do to make their work better and give pupils time to respond to the marking
 - teachers plan work that pupils can do without relying too much on adult help
 - teachers plan tasks and activities in a range of subjects that encourage pupils to use and practise what they already know and can do, especially in mathematics
 - teachers expect pupils to present their work neatly and to take pride in their work.

- Improve attendance for all pupils to at least average by:
 - closely monitoring the effectiveness of current initiatives to see whether they are working and amending them if they are not having sufficient impact
 - making sure parents are fully aware of the consequences of poor attendance.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers whose practice is not good enough quickly receive high quality support to improve
 - ensuring development plans include more detailed and specific targets that are easy to measure
 - analysing information about pupils' attainment and progress more rigorously to ensure pupils in every class are making at least good progress and holding teachers more firmly to account if this is not happening
 - ensuring the governing body holds school leaders robustly to account for improvements in pupil outcomes
 - undertaking an external review of governance to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 1 and 2 July 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed parts of 20 lessons. Seventeen observations were conducted jointly with four different school leaders. Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, four teachers who have undertaken a programme of coaching support and three teachers who will be joining the school in September. They also met with the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, a representative from the local authority and an external coach. Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons, looked at books and met with 20 pupils from Years 1 and 5. They also met with a small number of parents. Inspectors looked at the school's plans for improvement and school self-evaluation. They also looked at information about teaching, achievement and attendance.

Context

There have been a few changes to staff since the previous visit. A new leadership structure has been in place since Easter. A restructure of support staff will be completed for the start of the new academic year. On the first day of the inspection, pupils spent some of their time with staff who will be their class teachers next term. Three newly appointed teachers were visiting the school as part of their induction programme.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Early analysis of the 2014 National Curriculum test results indicates that pupils in Year 6 have achieved standards that are broadly similar to pupils last year. Too few have attained the average level in both English and mathematics. Nevertheless, these pupils have made better progress from lower starting points than did pupils last year. Having reviewed the in-year rate of progress made by pupils during Year 6, leaders have strengthened the school's approach to identifying and supporting pupils who have fallen behind. New systems are planned so that other pupils in the school receive higher-quality support at an earlier stage in the year.

Although pupils' attainment overall remains below average, their progress across the school is improving quickly in some year groups. Many children are beginning to catch up on their past underachievement and gaps in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils are narrowing. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' unconfirmed results in reading improved on last year and a greater proportion of pupils attained the highest level in mathematics. Levels of attainment in writing across the school are now closer to those reached in reading, particularly in Years 1 to 3. Levels of attainment in mathematics are generally improved, although this is not the case in Year 5. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are also beginning to make better progress from below-average starting points. However, there remains some inconsistency in the progress and attainment of pupils across different year groups and classes.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved steadily since the last visit and strongly since the previous inspection. Teachers have higher expectations, there is greater consistency in planning, and teachers' subject knowledge has improved. New approaches such as 'learning journeys' (which help pupils to check how well they are learning) are now found in most classes. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics, but less so in other areas of the curriculum.

Where teaching is strongest, pupils make faster progress because activities build successfully on what they already know and challenge pupils of different abilities to learn new skills or extend their knowledge. Pupils enjoy learning when it is made practical and relevant, and when teachers skilfully link learning in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 had made musical instruments in design and technology, used 'bossy verbs' when writing about their construction and studied how sound is made in science.

Teaching in some classes and in other areas of the curriculum has not improved at the same steady rate. In weaker lessons, teachers plan appropriate activities but the level of challenge is too limited. In other cases, pupils have to wait too long before they start challenging work that has been planned. As a result, their progress is too slow. Although support from other adults is generally helpful, it sometimes lacks direction or is poorly utilised during teacher-led parts of lessons.

Most pupils take pride in their work and presentation in books has generally improved. Teachers apply the school's marking policy with greater consistency. However, this is not yet true in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers are more confident in using a range of questions to encourage pupils to develop their responses. The successful use of 'Learning partners' helps pupils to think about and rehearse their responses to complex questions or solve problems. On a few occasions, the strategy is overused or discussion lacks focus.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have improved access to activities that cover all of the main areas for learning. However, adults do not always use a range of approaches to help develop children's language and learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Leaders continue to monitor the impact of new systems to improve attendance. The importance of good attendance is communicated clearly to pupils, and parents and carers. Good attendance is rewarded, absence is followed up promptly and action is taken when families find it difficult to ensure that children attend regularly.

As a result of the school's actions, attendance has continued to improve steadily since the last inspection visit. Although below the national average, it is higher than at the same time last year. Attendance in Nursery and Reception is still too low.

However, attendance in Year 1 has improved and is now close to the school average. The proportion of pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly has fallen but is still higher than average.

Pupils look very smart in their uniforms. Most arrive at lessons eager to learn and settle quickly. Pupils are generally well motivated; they work well on their own and with their peers, often helping each other with work when they get stuck. On a few occasions, when the pace of learning is too slow, pupils become restless, silly or too loud. Pupils confirmed that such behaviour is rare. They like the fact that there are clearer 'rules and rewards' and 'more discipline' which helps them to learn and feel safe. Parents and carers, and children, agree that behaviour at lunchtime is getting better.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher has ensured that his ambitious vision for improving teaching and pupils' achievement - shared by staff - is put into action. Leaders now take a fuller role in helping to drive improvement. Middle leaders have got to grips with their new roles quickly. In addition to their specific responsibilities, they carry out a range of focused monitoring activities. Information from these activities helps teachers to develop their individual practice and informs whole-school training.

Regular monitoring, supported by staff training and external coaching, has led to better-quality teaching in most year groups. Action plans focus on the areas of the school's work that need to improve most. Leaders monitor progress against the key actions carefully and amend plans when necessary. They analyse information on pupils' achievement regularly and hold teachers to account for the performance of the children they teach. Checks on teachers' assessment of pupils' work shows that this information is now more accurate and reliable. Weaknesses in assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been remedied.

The Chair of the Interim Executive Board checks at first hand the progress that the school makes in raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to improve further. Board meetings ensure that leaders are held to account for the impact of their work. Board members routinely check on safeguarding, the progress of different groups of pupils, the use of additional funding and the impact of training for teachers. The Interim Executive Board will remain in place until the school no longer requires special measures. Nevertheless, additional board members will be recruited in the autumn term with a view to their taking on roles as governors in the future.

Parents and carers are supportive about the improvements that leaders have made. They value the recent workshops that have been organised and opportunities to 'stay and play' with their children. These initiatives have given parents and carers a better understanding of their children's progress and how to support their learning at home. They would like further opportunities, but earlier in the year. Parents and

carers appreciate that the school is working hard to increase ways of working with them to enhance learning.

External support

The school works well with a range of external partners. Staff have benefited from a recent visit to an outstanding school. The local authority link adviser visits regularly and has a firm understanding of the progress the school is making. She has monitored the impact of external coaching support for teachers at first hand and has helped leaders to sharpen their focus on the quality of marking and feedback. Other local authority consultants have moderated teachers' assessments of pupils' work, ensuring that practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. Staff speak positively about the external coaching support they have received. In particular, it has helped them to improve their planning so that lessons better meet the learning needs of pupils. Although the impact on how teaching has improved varies, most staff have improved, as was confirmed during the inspection.