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4 July 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 to your school on 2 and 3 July 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 third 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 up to two 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 Interim Executive Director Children Young People and Families for Sheffield.

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 third monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 July 2014

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, pupils, a group of parents, the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative from the local authority. Eight part-lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.

Context

Since the last inspection, the Chair of the IEB has decided to step down, at the end of the summer term 2014, due to changes in his work arrangements. In preparation for this, a new Chair, who is a National Leader of Governance (NLG), has been shadowing the role. The deployment of the headteacher, by the local authority, has been extended to ensure continuity up to the point of the school's conversion to academy status, at least. The IEB has continued to manage the arrangements for academy conversion and passed a resolution for this to take place in the spring term 2015.

Several changes to staffing have taken place, including the recruitment of two new teachers to start in September 2014.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The achievement of pupils is rising at an accelerated rate since the last inspection. In reading and writing, previous improvements have been sustained and in mathematics significant improvement has been made, so that there is little difference in pupils' progress across the three subjects. The vast majority of pupils are now making up ground and standards are rising.

The school now has in place a robust system for checking on pupils' progress in Year 1 to Year 6. The data from this show around 75% of pupils made above average gains during the current academic year in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding (additional government money), boys, girls and looked-after children all made similar rates of progress. This demonstrates the school's improvement in providing equal opportunities for all. Rates of progress for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6, since the point at which they ended Year 2, are also improving.

Work in pupils' books shows significant improvement since the start of September 2013. In writing and mathematics there is a greater volume of recorded work, it is better presented and standards are clearly higher. Pupils say they are learning more. Parents commented on the higher expectations for pupils' achievement, citing the

need for more difficult reading books in Year 2 as an example of how pupils are being stretched more.

In lessons observed during the inspection pupils' learning shows improvement. In general, more is expected of pupils in a given time than was seen previously.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children show a little improvement in their progress compared with previous year groups. However, this improvement is slow and lags significantly behind that found in Year 1 to Year 6. In particular, the progress made by children in writing is weak, much weaker than in reading and mathematics. This is because expectations are not high enough and the work set for the children is too easy and does not stretch their learning.

The quality of teaching

Overall, the quality of teaching is improving strongly in Year 1 to Year 6. In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is not improving fast enough.

The impact of improvements is clearly shown in pupils' written work and in the school's tracking data. Additionally, the unvalidated outcomes from national tests taken in Year 6 this year show strong improvement, which is consistent with the school's predictions.

The features of effective teaching seen in lessons are underpinned by pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, which ensure they get the most from teachers' efforts. Pupils apply themselves diligently to their work and show very good concentration. Planning is sharper and most teachers use the information from tests and checks on pupils' learning to plan activities and tasks which suitably stretch pupils' understanding. Teaching has improved the way pupils learn in a step-by-step systematic fashion, which is checked carefully at each stage. Teachers and pupils model learning so that pupils understand things quickly. For example, in one lesson seen during the inspection, a pupil confidently used the whiteboard to draw a mathematical calculation to work out the midpoint between two numbers. As he drew, he explained his working clearly and methodically. The way in which the correct mathematical terms are used and taught is improving. Pupils learn 'inverse', for example, and such language is collected on boards for future reference. The contribution made by teaching assistants to pupils' learning is improving. A good example of this is shown in some mathematics sessions during which teaching assistants take a lead in teaching. This enables small groups of pupils with similar starting points to be taught more effectively.

While improving overall, the quality of teaching still shows some variation and weaker practice. For example, some work is pitched at too easy a level for some pupils and, as a result, learning is limited and slows. Also, some pupils are given

problems to solve which are overly complicated, leaving them confused and unable to make progress.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching fails to stretch many children sufficiently, especially the most able. While some improvement is evident, such as in the organisation and management of the classroom, many children spend too much time engaged in tasks which are aimless. Additionally, teaching does not take enough notice of the various starting points of the children. For example, in teaching the sounds that letters make (phonics), the children mostly learn the same sounds together and this means that for several children they are not learning anything new. Some most-able children are not being taught the higher level skills they are capable of learning and, as such, are being held back.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In lessons and around the school pupils behave very well. They are polite to each other and to staff and visitors. Pupils' attendance is improving strongly and is now above the national average. The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from school has fallen significantly this year and now compares favourably with the national average. Pupils say that there is a little misbehaviour at lunchtime but this is dealt with very well by staff. Parents praised the way staff are approachable, the good communication with the school and the prompt action taken if there are any incidents.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, is improving the effectiveness of the staff team. Through increasingly effective staff development and management, the quality of teaching is improving and the progress made by pupils is gaining momentum. Consequently, pupils are making up ground and standards are rising.

The IEB provides increasingly strong governance for the school. Members meet frequently and minutes show a higher level of challenge to school leaders. Since the last inspection, the leaders of English, mathematics and special educational needs have separately attended IEB meetings to provide detailed reports. As a result, members of the IEB are better informed about the progress which pupils are making and the quality of teaching, particularly in Year 1 to Year 6. Leaders are increasingly knowledgeable about staff performance because the data are informative, the time allocated to monitoring has increased and the targets set for staff performance are more sharply aligned with pupils' progress.

Effective succession planning is ensuring that the momentum of improvement is maintained. The transition to academy status is managed well by the IEB.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress to improve leadership and provide a firm steer to improvement has been slow. Despite external support for teaching, the impact on the quality of teaching and the progress made by children is too little. Subject leaders have few opportunities to monitor in this key stage and so have limited impact. Urgent improvement is needed, as outlined in the points for improvement at the end of this report.

External support

The local authority continues to provide support for the school via the deployment of staff, such as the Chair of the IEB and the headteacher. Additionally, the local authority carried out a review of teaching during June 2014 and signposted school leaders to an external consultant. The work of the consultant has helped improve teaching in parts of the school. Also, additional teaching support was sourced by the headteacher to provide extra help to pupils in Year 6 who this year were entered for the higher Level 6 mathematics national test.

Additional points for improvement

- Urgently increase the rate of improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage, quality of leadership, teaching and children's progress by:
 - providing training to improve staff understanding of how young children learn
 - significantly raising teaching expectations for the progress of children, especially the most able
 - bringing the Early Years Foundation Stage into line with other year groups, so that children's progress is systematically checked on and the outcomes of this used to inform teaching fully.