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20 November 2014

Mrs Claire Peat
Headteacher
Castle View Primary School
School Road
Matlock
DE4 3DS

Dear Mrs Peat

Special measures monitoring inspection of Castle View Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18–19 November 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 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 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 Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley
Her Majesty's Inspector
Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to a good standard and raise pupils' achievement to at least the level expected of their age by:
 - improving lesson planning so that all pupils are set work that moves their learning forward at a good pace
 - increasing teachers' expectations of what different pupils can achieve, especially the more able
 - ensuring that teachers use accurate assessment information to keep a close check on pupils' progress and act swiftly to help anyone falling behind
 - adapting teaching as lessons unfold to respond to the learning needs and strengths of all pupils
 - improving marking so that pupils are clear about what they need to do next to aim high.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - checking the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning at regular intervals and taking the necessary action to ensure it is at least good
 - ensuring that pupils' progress is regularly and accurately assessed and that this information is used by managers to check on teachers' performance
 - developing the role of the senior leadership team so that it provides effective support to the headteacher in making improvements
 - ensuring that the school development plan includes sufficiently rigorous targets and that actions bring about timely and sustained improvement
 - improving the effectiveness of the governing body in challenging school leaders and holding them to account for their work
 - undertaking an external review of governance to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 18–19 November 2014

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents and samples of pupils' writing and mathematics work from each class. She met with: the leaders of the upper school and the lower school; five representatives of the governing body; and two advisers from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the school hall has reopened and other building works have been completed. The school now has a library and an additional classroom. Governors have agreed to move towards sponsored academy status and are working with the Department for Education to identify potential sponsors for the school. The lower school leader has moved into Year 1, and classes have been reorganised to ensure that pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are now taught as discrete groups. One Key Stage 2 teacher is not in school due to long-term sickness absence.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Unvalidated information on the achievement of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in the 2014 national tests was disappointing. While they reached similar standards to the year before, the progress they made from their starting points in Year 3 did not improve, and in mathematics the majority of the 11 pupils failed to make expected progress. However, these outcomes were largely in line with school predictions and there were no significant gaps in achievement between boys and girls across all the main areas of learning. Disadvantaged pupils achieved in line with other pupils and made more progress than their peers in reading.

The headteacher has worked closely with the local authority to validate the standards reached by current pupils across all year groups in the school. This shows that achievement is improving. Pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 is now in line with the national average for reading and writing. Some more-able pupils are now on track to achieve Level 5 across all subjects for the first time. However, pupils are making less progress in mathematics and leaders have completed a full analysis of the gaps they have in their understanding of this subject. Consequently, leaders have reviewed the whole-school calculations policy. Teachers are now assessing pupils' understanding at the start of lessons so they can better target the work to meet their needs. Evidence from observations and from pupils' work in books shows that pupils' achievement in mathematics is improving.

Achievement by the end of Key Stage 1 improved last year in reading and writing, but not in mathematics. Pupils were still about two terms behind the national

average in reading and writing and a year behind in mathematics. Current pupils still need to make accelerated progress in order to close the gaps in their learning and reach the levels expected for their age. The lower school leader is monitoring the quality of teaching and the progress of all pupils across the key stage very closely. While there is still much to be done, it is clear that leaders have developed a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and that pupils now have more opportunities to apply this in their writing. For example, pupils in Year 1 have advanced quickly from labelling pictures with simple words in September to writing sentences confidently by November.

The quality of teaching

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last monitoring visit. Expectations are high and the vast majority of teachers accept and respond well to the support that is in place from school leaders and external consultants. Leaders and managers are acting appropriately in order to eradicate any weaker practice that remains.

The new approach to developing writing has reaped dividends, with pupils across the school making much better progress in this area. Teachers in Key Stage 2 follow a common planning format with four 'steps' for learning in each lesson. This has ensured that teachers are thinking carefully about the level of challenge for all pupils. Consequently, pupils of all abilities are accessing learning that is at a more appropriate level for them and they are making better progress as a result. However, continued turbulence in staffing has meant that pupils in the Year 3/4 class do not have sufficient, well-planned opportunities to develop their literacy and mathematical skills across other subjects. This is limiting the pace of improvement.

All teachers are now marking books regularly, following the school's assessment policy. Pupils have time each morning to 'fix' their work and, where teaching is most effective, they remember not to make similar mistakes later on. In Key Stage 1 parents are encouraged to join their children to help them with this. Where this happens, parents have a good understanding of how to support their children in their learning at home.

Teachers are not as effective in keeping a close check on pupils' progress in lessons. As a result, those pupils who could move on to work that is more difficult at an earlier stage are having to wait longer than they should. On the other hand, less able pupils do not always have their mistakes corrected in time; this is particularly so in mathematics. Their progress slows because the teacher moves the whole class onto a new topic without making sure these pupils have learnt what they should have.

Teachers' planning in subjects other than English and mathematics is not as well developed as it needs to be, so pupils do not develop their knowledge and

understanding in these subjects as well as they should. While pupils have very rich opportunities to study aspects of history, such as the 1960s in Key Stage 2, this, and other foundation subjects are not yet established across all year groups in the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a calm, orderly community and pupils behave well, cooperating with adults at all times. Pupils take pride in their work and try hard to present it neatly, underlining titles, using a ruler to draw diagrams in mathematics and science, and correcting their mistakes carefully. Pupils enjoy working together in lessons and frequently support their classmates when they find their work difficult. A few older pupils can become distracted when adults do not directly supervise them but this is rare.

Attendance in 2013-2014 was close to the national average for primary schools. Attendance so far is above the average for the same period last year.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher continues to lead school improvement with resolute determination. She will accept only the very best for the children of this school and the whole school community shares her ambitions. The impact this is having on bringing about rapid improvement is endorsed by parents, who agree that the school is well led and managed.

Leaders have retained their focus on improving teaching. All teachers have performance management targets based on all their pupils making at least good progress. In addition, other leaders are expected to have a direct impact on improving teaching in their areas of the school. The lower school leader now teaches in Key Stage 1 and is having a direct influence on improving standards in this area. Leaders have management time and are using this effectively to monitor teaching and report to the headteacher on improvements. Consequently, the capacity for further improvement lies now very much with the senior leadership team. There is less need for additional, external support.

Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is robust and based on a careful analysis of pupils' outcomes. From this, the headteacher has worked with other leaders and governors to write a detailed school improvement plan for this year. Governors continue to develop their expertise and strength, seeking support from the local authority, for example, in understanding school performance data. Since the last monitoring inspection, they have drawn up a schedule of monitoring visits, aligned with the school improvement plan. They are now directly involved in checking on school improvement. They use this information well to challenge senior

leaders and to make decisions about how to use resources to support them in improving the school further.

External support

The local authority has provided very effective support to the school since the last inspection. This has enabled the headteacher to build the competencies of her leadership team and to challenge and support teaching staff. Advisers have provided valuable support to individual teachers and have externally validated teacher assessment. This has ensured that all school leaders have a very accurate view of the progress they are making to bring the school out of special measures.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced, by planning for greater learning opportunities across the full range of national curriculum subjects.

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk