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27 November 2014

Azita Zohhadi
Interim Headteacher
Nansen Primary School - A Park View Academy
Naseby Road
Birmingham
B8 3HG

Dear Ms Zohhadi

Special measures monitoring inspection of Nansen Primary School - A Park View Academy

Following my visit with Deana Holdaway, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Sarah Noble, Additional Inspector, to your school on 25–26 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement 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 sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.
- I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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 Trustees, the Academies Advisers Unit and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools
- The lead and team inspectors.

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2014

- Make sure that all leaders and managers keep pupils safe and prepare them for life in modern Britain by:
 - ensuring that pupils understand how to deal with all types of bullying
 - working with other agencies to make sure that pupils recognise the dangers and risks associated with extremism and radicalisation
 - implementing a programme of religious education that helps pupils understand the main beliefs of all major religions
 - making sure there is a suitably qualified person to administer paediatric first aid.

- Make sure that the governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities by:
 - having fair and transparent recruitment processes
 - ensuring equal opportunities for staff and pupils
 - making sure the academy provides a broad range of subjects for all pupils
 - providing effectively for pupils' cultural development
 - improving the management and checking procedures of the academy's finances.

- Ensure teachers improve their teaching and raise pupils' attainment, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, by:
 - making sure that leaders check on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make
 - checking that teachers' marking helps pupils improve their work
 - insisting that teachers take account of what pupils already know and understand when planning activities, especially for the more-able pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs
 - making sure that teachers always spell words correctly
 - making sure that pupils spell correctly, use grammar and punctuation appropriately and write legibly
 - using information about pupils' achievement to check carefully how well different groups of pupils are learning
 - using assessment information to identify pupils' needs more quickly
 - appointing a full-time and qualified special educational needs coordinator.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 25–26 November 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, the executive principal, other senior leaders, representatives from the board of trustees, the Chair of the Local Governing Body, a senior leader from Nelson Mandela Primary School and the headteacher and senior leaders from Arden Primary School. Inspectors spoke informally to pupils and parents. They considered responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and took account of 49 Ofsted staff questionnaire responses.

Context

In October 2014, the board of trustees commissioned the headteacher of Nelson Mandela Primary School to take on the role of interim headteacher at Nansen. In November 2014, the previous acting headteacher returned to her post as vice-principal. The trustees appointed a teacher to take responsibility for overseeing the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and an administrator for collating and analysing information about pupils' achievement. Both members of staff joined the school in September 2014. A local governing body has been recently established. It will meet for the first time in December 2014.

The assistant headteacher from Nelson Mandela Primary School and the headteacher and senior leaders from Arden Primary School have been providing training and support for teachers and teaching assistants at Nansen. Staff have also received training on keeping pupils safe, supplied by local authority advisers and external consultants. At the time of this inspection, both vice-principals were not in school and seven classes were being taught by temporary teachers.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Provisional results for 2014 show that at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reached the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was similar to the national figures in reading and writing. It was below in mathematics. Boys attained less well than girls in writing. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were average in writing and mathematics. They were significantly below in reading. Boys attained less well than girls in reading and writing. From their different starting points in Year 2, most pupils in Year 6 made at least expected progress and some made good progress in writing and mathematics. In contrast, a significant minority of pupils did not make enough progress in reading. Disabled pupils and those who had special educational needs made expected progress.

Staff from Nelson Mandela Primary School have checked the school's latest information about pupils' achievement because of concerns about accuracy. This

information shows that standards across Key Stages 1 and 2 are low in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence from work in pupils' books and visits to lessons shows that although standards remain low they are rising, most notably in mathematics.

In mathematics, teachers are increasingly planning activities that build on pupils' previous knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. Some teachers are giving pupils regular opportunities to solve complex mathematical problems that challenge and extend their thinking. Standards in writing and reading are not rising as quickly as in mathematics for a number of reasons. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend and develop their writing skills by writing at length or practising their writing across other subjects. Although teachers are getting better at making sure pupils use grammar and punctuation correctly, weaknesses remain in pupils' spelling. With regards to reading, the activities that teachers plan for reading lessons do not always help pupils develop their reading skills. Also, teachers, particularly in Key Stage 2, do not always encourage pupils to use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to help them with their reading.

Boys, the most able pupils, and those who are disabled and have special educational needs are capable of making faster progress and reaching higher standards.

The quality of teaching

Teaching is improving steadily. The training and support from staff at Nelson Mandela and Arden are helpful and appropriate. However, this is not leading to consistently good or better teaching in all age groups. This is because the senior assistant headteachers and assistant headteachers do not make sure that all teachers implement the actions agreed during training.

Where learning was seen to be most effective, teachers gave pupils clear instructions and helped them to understand exactly what they were expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Teachers also asked pertinent questions to check pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. They also used pupils' responses to their questions to make suitable changes to lessons. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher realised that some pupils were not writing their sentences correctly. The teacher intervened promptly and showed them how to rectify their errors.

Where learning was less effective, the activities for the most able pupils and the pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs were either too easy or difficult. Pupils were also asked to complete activities without being given the correct equipment. In one instance, pupils in Year 5 were asked to draw squares on 'plain white boards' even though boards with squares were available. A number of pupils struggled to draw the squares with accuracy, and spent too long trying to draw the squares rather than solving the mathematical problem. There were occasions during

the inspection when teachers did not start lessons promptly. This wasted valuable learning time.

Presentation in pupils' writing and mathematical books has improved. Pupils increasingly take pride in their work and try hard to form their letters and numbers correctly and neatly. Presentation in other books remains variable, with some pupils scribbling out and not writing legibly.

Most teachers regularly mark pupils' work and identify errors. Nevertheless, pupils are not always expected to correct their work. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to evaluate their learning and identify 'what they have learnt' and 'what could be even better'. Pupils told inspectors that teachers are spelling correctly when they mark or write comments in their books. Inspectors' reviews of samples of pupils' work confirm this to be the case.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is improving. In lessons, pupils work together well and are polite and helpful. Their attitudes to learning are directly influenced by teaching. When teachers plan interesting activities, pupils tend to respond to their work and engage in discussions with enthusiasm. Pupils' behaviour during break times is boisterous, especially in the Year 3 and 4 playground. The outdoor area is dominated by football games with limited space for other activities. This results in pupils who do not want to play football just standing on the outskirts of the playground.

Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe in different situations has improved markedly. They speak confidently about being careful when using the internet and social media sites, and are aware of how to deal with different types of bullying. Pupils told inspectors that there are a few incidents of racist name-calling, and that when these occur staff respond appropriately. Inspectors' reviews of the school's records verify this.

The school's procedures for recording incidents of misbehaviour have improved. Senior leaders have recorded and analysed incidents of poor behaviour by pupil, year group, gender and time of day. In response to this analysis the adults responsible for supporting pupils' behaviour (called 'learning mentors') have started to work with key individual and groups of pupils. This is a recent development and the impact has yet to be seen.

Pupils' attendance remains below the national average for primary schools. The school's leaders have introduced a range of rewards to promote regular attendance.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leadership has considerably strengthened with the appointment of the interim headteacher and with the additional support provided by staff from Nelson Mandela

Primary School and Arden Primary School. The interim headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. She is working well with the executive principal and the trustees to strengthen all aspects of the school's work.

The school's improvement plan has been revised and is now fit for purpose. The actions within the plan are appropriate and are strongly focused on raising pupils' achievement, improving teaching, and strengthening leadership. The plan does not always make clear how the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' achievement and teaching will be measured.

The interim headteacher, executive principal and trustees are fully aware that not all of the other leaders have the leadership skills required to lead improvements in the school. Some do not have a secure enough understanding of the school's most pressing priorities or the actions that they need to take. The senior assistant headteachers and assistant headteachers have written individual action plans for their areas of responsibility. These plans do not always identify the precise actions that will be taken to help different groups of pupils make better progress and to improve teaching. Additionally, when some of these leaders observe teachers and review pupils' work they do not focus enough on the achievement of different groups of pupils. Consequently, their guidance to teachers is imprecise.

The interim headteacher and trustees are taking appropriate action in response to their concerns about the senior assistant headteachers and assistant headteachers. They will begin a consultation regarding proposed changes to the staffing structure and the roles and responsibilities of all senior leaders in December.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, improvements have been made to the recording and analysis of information relating to pupils' achievement. The administrator with responsibility for this aspect has produced a helpful overview of the standards attained by different groups of pupils in the school, and how they compare with standards attained by pupils nationally. Although this information is being used to identify the pupils that would benefit from additional support, teachers are not always using it to plan suitable activities for pupils of different abilities.

The teacher with responsibility for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has started to organise appropriate additional support for pupils with specific needs. However, she is not making sure that all teachers effectively meet the learning needs of these pupils in the classroom. Consequently, this group of pupils do not always make enough progress.

Pupils are now being taught a broad range of subjects. They commented that their lessons are more interesting because of this. As part of their work on the Second World War, for instance, pupils in a Year 6 class created a piece of artwork depicting a lone soldier against a backdrop of suitable colours. Their work successfully captured the poignancy associated with the war and encouraged pupils to reflect upon this significant moment in history. With guidance from the interim

headteacher, the teacher with responsibility for developing the curriculum is refining the planning for different subjects to ensure that there is an increased focus on developing pupils' skills and deepening their understanding.

Pupils' cultural development and understanding of life in modern Britain have improved. In each year group pupils are beginning to develop a greater understanding about faiths and cultures that are different from their own. Pupils have a secure understanding of the democratic process. They were keen to talk about the current 'Nansen politician' elections and the importance of making sure that they were conducted fairly.

The interim headteacher, executive principal and trustees have met with parents to explain the changes taking place in the school. They are keen to further improve communication between the school and parents. The recently formed local governing body has been tasked with reporting to and meeting regularly with parents.

The board of trustees provides an effective level of challenge and support. It has introduced fair and transparent procedures for staff appointments, and has made sure that pupils are taught a wider range of subjects and learn about different religions. Members have also introduced clearer procedures for expenditure and checking of spending. The arrangements for keeping pupils safe have been strengthened and now meet statutory requirements. Staff have received training on recognising the dangers and risks associated with extremism and radicalisation. This has raised staff awareness of the importance of keeping pupils safe from any potential harm. There is also now a qualified person to administer paediatric first aid. The board of trustees has not yet organised an external review of pupil premium expenditure.

External support

The sponsor has taken appropriate steps to ensure the statement of action is fit for purpose. The range of support for staff identified in the plan and the timescales for making the necessary changes are appropriate. The plan does not always make clear how success will be measured.

The headteacher and assistant headteacher of Nelson Mandela have strengthened leadership. The staff from Arden have contributed to steady improvements in teaching. A range of local authority advisers and external consultants have made sure that staff have received relevant training in relation to keeping pupils safe.