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12 December 2014

Ms Jill Davis
Executive Headteacher
Terrington St John Primary School
School Road
Terrington St John
Wisbech
PE14 7SG

Dear Ms Davis

Special measures monitoring inspection of Terrington St John Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10–11 December 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 April 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 no more than 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 Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority
cc. The Secretary of State

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - give pupils work that is at the right level for them, especially ensuring that it is hard enough to challenge the more able
 - use the skills of support staff effectively during all parts of the lesson
 - have sufficiently high expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' written work
 - encourage pupils to learn to work without always having direct help from adults.

- Improve pupils' achievement, especially in writing and reading, by:
 - improving teachers' knowledge of how to teach reading and writing, particularly the links between letters and the sounds they make
 - ensuring every opportunity is given to all pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - making sure that marking highlights the strengths in pupils' work, provides clear guidance about how it can be improved, and gives enough attention to the quality of writing and handwriting, whatever the subject
 - improving pupils' attendance.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring leaders:
 - check regularly that teachers' lessons and lesson plans result in pupils making better progress in their work, including those receiving support through the pupil premium
 - give all staff performance management objectives for improving their teaching, providing them with any necessary training to help achieve their targets, and holding them to account for the progress pupils make
 - use evidence in pupils' books to be sure that assessments of standards and progress are accurate, and record and present these judgements clearly
 - use more accurate information about how well the school is doing to write sharply focused plans for improving the school's performance
 - carefully, consistently and robustly follow up and record any inappropriate behaviour or incidents of bullying.

- Ensure governors gain a clear view of the school's effectiveness and the quality of its teaching within the federation, and demand improvements from leaders. An external review of governance should be carried out, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management could be improved.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 December 2014

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and met with the executive headteacher to discuss progress since the previous inspection. He also met with two deputy headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator, all of whom work across the Windmill Federation of schools. The inspector made several visits to classrooms, some with the headteacher, to observe teaching and learning. He looked at the work in pupils' books and listened to some pupils read and talk about their experience of school. The inspector also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. He scrutinised documents, including records of behaviour monitoring, attendance information and data relating to pupils' academic progress. He also met with a representative of the local authority and two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.

Context

Since the previous inspection one teacher has left the school and a new teacher has been appointed. A special educational needs coordinator has also been appointed to work across the Windmill Federation of schools.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Although pupils across the school are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics, there are still too many gaps in their learning. Results at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 in 2014 showed that pupils were not well prepared for the next stage of their education at the start of this school year. The teaching of early reading has been weak and in mathematics pupils were, on average, more than two terms behind where they should have been at the end of Key Stage 1. However, there have recently been significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The quality of work seen during this inspection, along with the school's assessment information, indicates that pupils are now making better progress. Pupils' rates of progress are also improving in Key Stage 2. Higher levels of achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 reflect the improvements that have been made to the quality of teaching and learning. However, the work seen in pupils' books during this inspection shows that many pupils still have gaps in their learning, particularly in writing.

The quality of teaching

Teachers are committed to improving their teaching and have responded well to the support and advice that have been provided by senior leaders. As a result, teaching continues to improve. The quality of the relationships between adults and pupils is a strength of the school. In lessons pupils of all abilities are confident and keen to respond to the questions that teachers pose. As a result, pupils' speaking and

listening skills are being developed extremely well. Teachers provide effective feedback to pupils during lessons and in some year groups, they provide clear advice to pupils about how they can improve their written work. However, significant weaknesses remain in the quality of marking and the quality of presentation. Errors in pupils' work are often not picked up and, as a result, pupils continue to make the same mistakes. This has restricted the progress that has been made. The school has recently acknowledged that improvements are required in these areas and have provided support and more specific guidance to teachers. This action has already resulted in some improvements.

The teaching of early reading has improved. Teachers and teaching assistants have been well trained and the teaching of phonics is now more effective. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage demonstrated good knowledge of phonics when coming across words they did not recognise; they are quickly developing into good readers. In Key Stage 2 most pupils read regularly. However, opportunities to record pupils' progress are not always taken and lower ability pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to read regularly to an adult. As a result the progress they are making in reading is less rapid.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are happy in school and enjoy learning. They show good levels of concentration during lessons and behave respectfully towards one another at play times. Behaviour while pupils move around school is very good. Those pupils spoken to, during this inspection, say that bullying no longer happens at the school. Pupils recognise that behaviour at the school has improved considerably over the past two years and have confidence that any poor behaviour will be dealt with effectively by staff. The school has also worked hard to improve attendance. Good procedures are in place to encourage pupils to attend regularly and appropriate measures are taken when a pupil's absence is a cause for concern. This work is beginning to have a positive impact and attendance rates are improving.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher has communicated a clear vision for the school and all members of staff are working hard to improve their practice and raise achievement. Leadership capacity has been increased by sharing staff and expertise across the federation. This is beginning to have a positive impact, for example, in the improvements that have been made to the arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, the systems that are used to check on the quality of teaching and learning have not, until recently, been sufficiently rigorous. Consequently, school leaders have not addressed issues in a timely manner, nor have they provided sufficient guidance to teachers about expectations regarding issues such as marking and presentation. Leaders acknowledge these shortcomings and have now put in place more robust arrangements for checking on standards.

The new governing body is quickly establishing an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are ambitious for the school and recognise the challenges that remain before the school can be judged to be good.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide good support and challenge to the school. The school is also making good use of expertise in the Windmill Federation. Recent support, aimed at improving writing across Key Stage 2, is already having a positive impact on the quality of work being produced and the written feedback that is being provided for pupils.