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13 February 2015

Christine Mitchell
Executive headteacher
Manor Park Primary School
Church Lane
Aston
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B6 5UQ

Dear Mrs Mitchell

Special measures monitoring inspection of Manor Park Primary School

Following my visit with Timothy Sherriff, Associate Inspector, to your school on 11–12 February 2015, 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 May 2014. 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 not making enough 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 Governing Body 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)
- The Secretary of State

Annex

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

- Improve teaching, especially in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils make faster progress by making sure that teachers:
 - accurately identify and point out errors in pupils' work and insist that pupils correct them
 - give pupils more challenging tasks that teach them something new.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - taking steps to address the concerns of staff, restore their confidence in senior leaders and raise their morale
 - carrying out more accurate checks on the quality of teaching and addressing the weaknesses identified
 - drawing up and implementing a sharply focused plan to improve the school's performance
 - training governors to analyse data so they are more aware of how well the school is performing and better able to challenge senior leaders
 - improving the way that school finances, especially pupil premium funds, are managed.

An external review of governance and the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11–12 February 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), groups of pupils, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke informally with parents during the monitoring inspection. All of the lessons observed during this monitoring inspection were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Inspectors reviewed some pupils' topic work with the deputy headteacher. They also took account of the 26 staff questionnaire responses.

Context

There have been a number of recent and significant changes at leadership level. The headteacher has been absent due to ill health since the first week of February 2015. At the time of the previous monitoring inspection in November 2014, the headteacher of Clifton Primary, who is also a National Leader in Education, was supporting the headteacher of Manor Park. In February 2015, the local authority asked the headteacher of Clifton Primary to assume the role of executive headteacher at Manor Park for two days per week. One of the deputy headteachers returned to work from maternity leave on a part-time basis in the last week before the end of the autumn term. Since the absence of the headteacher, she has started to work full-time and taken on responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. From September 2014, the assistant headteacher took on the role of acting deputy headteacher. The second deputy headteacher was not in school at the time of this monitoring inspection. She has been seconded to work at another local school.

There have been considerable changes in class teachers since the last monitoring inspection in November 2014. In 13 out of the 17 classes, pupils have been taught by more than one temporary teacher. Between November 2014 and February 2015, 11 temporary teachers have joined and subsequently left the school. At the time of this monitoring inspection, seven out of the 17 classes were being taught by temporary teachers.

As part of the local authority support arrangements, the headteacher from Clifton Primary has continued to support the headteacher at Manor Park. Additionally, Early Years Foundation Stage staff at Manor Park have had the opportunity to visit and observe teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Nelson Mandela Primary.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Standards remain low. In each year group, the standards attained by a significant proportion of pupils are low, especially in mathematics. The results of the 2014 Year 2 teacher assessments and the Year 6 national tests show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics were significantly below the national average. The Year 6 pupils that left the school in July 2014 did not make enough progress from their starting points in Year 2.

Rates of progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 have been hindered by the high number of changes of class teacher and continuing weaknesses in teaching. In many classes, pupils of different abilities are not making enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books reflects this slow rate of progress, with pupils making insufficient gains in skills and knowledge. In a few classes in Years 2 and 6, rates of progress are improving because of some stronger teaching.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, rates of progress are variable. In the Reception classes, children make at least the progress they should. This is as a result of teachers planning activities that are better matched to children's specific learning needs. In contrast, children do not always make enough progress in the Nursery. This is because, and as reported previously, activities do not always help children to deepen or build on their existing knowledge and skills.

The quality of teaching

Teaching remains inadequate. Weak teaching in most classes is preventing pupils from making sufficient progress. Teachers are not making effective use of the information they have about what pupils know, understand and can do to plan suitable work. The most-able pupils are often given activities that are too easy. In contrast, the activities for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are too difficult. Teachers do not make sure that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils are confused once they start to work on their own and they make errors in their work.

There are a number of reasons why pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics, reading and writing in many classes. Teachers do not always make sure that pupils know how to add, subtract, multiply or divide numbers with accuracy when answering mathematical questions. Consequently, pupils make errors with their calculations and provide incorrect responses to the questions they have been given. During reading sessions, the activities that pupils are expected to complete by themselves do not always help pupils to develop their reading skills. Teachers do not place a strong enough emphasis on making sure that pupils spell correctly and use punctuation and grammar accurately when writing. As a result, these aspects remain weak when pupils write.

Teachers' marking is variable. The most effective marking helps pupils to correct their errors and improve their work. Teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work are low. Pupils scribble, form letters incorrectly and produce untidy work. Inspectors found example of pupils' work that had deteriorated noticeably since the previous monitoring inspection.

In Reception, and in some classes in Years 2 and 6, teachers help pupils to make the progress they should. In these classes, teachers give pupils generally suitable activities. They check pupils' understanding and challenge pupils' thinking through their questions. These teachers also keep a close check on pupils as they work and provide timely support for pupils who need help.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils are polite and well mannered. Pupils were keen to talk with inspectors about their work and their school. Pupils confirmed they feel safe in school but raised concerns about behaviour. They explained that behaviour is better in the mornings than in the afternoons, a few pupils are disrespectful towards teachers, there are occasional incidents of racist name calling, and that some pupils do not behave well with temporary staff. School records corroborate pupils' concerns about behaviour. Between September 2014 and October 2014, staff reported 100 incidents of poor behaviour. Since January 2015, staff have reported 293 incidents of poor behaviour. School leaders have introduced a system of 'rewards and consequences' to encourage pupils to behave well. The impact of this system on pupils' behaviour has yet to be seen.

Teaching does not always encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning. Some lessons are uninspiring and fail to capture pupils' interest. Teachers and teaching assistant do not consistently discourage or respond to inappropriate behaviour during lessons. Consequently, some pupils choose to stop working and play with equipment instead of completing their activities. In the playground, most pupils play together amicably. A few pupils are a little boisterous and do not play calmly with others. Attendance remains similar to the national average for primary school. The number of pupils who do not attend school regularly has continued to reduce.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The school is not improving quickly enough. Despite suitable advice and support from the headteacher of Clifton Primary, the headteacher of Manor Park and other senior leaders have been unable to make the changes required to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement. The high turnover of class teachers has also hindered improvements in the school.

Systems for checking the work of staff remain inadequate. Some staff raised concerns about the lack of clarity in relation to what they are expected to do to help pupils make better progress. During the third week of January, senior leaders reviewed teaching across the school and produced a written report that summarised their findings. This report accurately identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and the actions that need to be taken by teachers. However, the report has not been shared with staff and therefore they remain unaware of the actions they need to take. The teachers tasked with leading improvements in English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage have a better understanding of teaching in their areas of responsibility. However, once weaknesses are identified, they do not make sure that all staff begin to tackle these right away. This is resulting in continued inconsistencies in teaching across the school and between subjects.

The newly appointed executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have a secure understanding of the actions required to improve the school. The actions identified within the revised school improvement plan are appropriate and strongly focused on raising pupils' achievement, improving pupils' behaviour and strengthening teaching and leadership. However, these three leaders have not been responsible for leading changes in the school for long and have therefore not had a chance to make enough of a difference to pupils' achievement, behaviour or teaching.

With support from the executive headteacher, staff have introduced a topic-based approach to teaching subjects such as history and geography. The topics that have been selected are much more enjoyable for pupils than previously. Pupils in Year 4, for instance, were eager to tell inspectors about their rainforest topic and how much they had learnt.

The IEB has not been checking the work of the school rigorously enough. In part, this is because they have not been receiving the precise information they need to check the impact of the actions being taken by senior leaders on the achievement of pupils and on teaching. Additionally, the IEB has had very little involvement in revising the school improvement plan or checking the school's progress towards meeting the success criteria identified in the plan. An external review of the use of the pupil premium has not yet been arranged. The IEB has continued to monitor expenditure and check that additional government funding is being spent correctly. However, they have not checked if this money is making a difference to pupils' achievement.

External support

The support arranged by the local authority for the headteacher has had limited impact. The headteacher has been unable to make the necessary changes. In contrast, the topic-based curriculum, introduced with the support of the executive headteacher, is helping pupils to gain new knowledge in subjects such as geography.

The newly appointed executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and acting deputy headteacher acknowledge that urgent action is required to improve the school. Following discussions with Her Majesty's Inspector, the local authority adviser and the executive headteacher have made arrangements for staff and leaders with specific responsibilities to receive support from staff at a number of local successful schools. This support will begin within the next few weeks.