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13 February 2015

Ms Lisa Andrews
Headteacher
Wath Central Primary
Fitzwilliam Street
Wath-upon-Dearne
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S63 7HG

Dear Ms Andrews

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wath Central Primary

Following my visit with Gina White, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 11 and 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 June 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 Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Wiles

Associate Inspector

Appointed as an Additional Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Annex

Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:

- ensuring that the governing body carry out their statutory duty in making sure that all aspects of safeguarding meet statutory requirements, including the safer recruitment and checking of staff on their suitability to work with children
- ensuring all staff are regularly updated and trained on how to keep pupils safe
- analysing the behaviour logs so leaders can be proactive rather than reactive in attending to any unacceptable behaviour
- ensuring governors hold the school fully to account for the actions taken to improve the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and their achievement
- ensuring that the systems used for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching are rigorous and that teachers are clear and well supported, as to how they can improve their teaching
- using the data management systems more effectively to quickly attend to any underachievement of the different group of pupils.

Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, particularly for the most able pupils, by ensuring that:

- questioning is used more effectively to challenge pupils to think and deepen their understanding
- teaching assistants are used well to help pupils make the best learning they can. Pupils' work is marked, giving clear guidance to them on the next steps needed to improve their work and that pupils are given opportunities to act on the advice.

Improve achievement to be at least good in mathematics and English, particularly in Years 3 and 4 by:

- getting pupils to use and apply the mathematical skills they are developing in mathematics lessons and in the other subjects they learn
- developing pupils' writing skills so they can write competently in all subjects giving the older pupils opportunities to read more widely in a range of subjects improving pupils' comprehension skills.

Improve pupils' behaviour, safety and attendance by:

- ensuring robust risk assessment procedures are fully in place, that these are specific to the school and that checks are regularly carried out to ensure pupils are and can stay safe
- enabling pupils to know how to control their own behaviour around the school and to ensure that they develop respect for themselves and others, particularly in Key Stage 2
- training teaching assistants to better manage pupils' behaviour improving attendance, especially for boys and those supported by the pupil premium funding.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 to 12 February 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work including 17 lessons, two of which were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised documents and examples of pupils' work. They met with the headteacher and other leaders, groups of teachers, groups of pupils, the Chair and members of the Governing Body, representatives from the local authority and the seconded headteacher.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit a local authority consultant head teacher has begun working with the school. This arrangement began in January 2015, specifically to improve the rate of progress on actions in the school plan.

Achievement of pupils at the school

In the 2014 national tests, 69% of Year 6 pupils achieved the standard expected for their age in reading, mathematics and writing compared with 79% nationally. Over a third of pupils did not reach the expected level in the spelling, punctuation and grammar tests. Leaders have yet to investigate the reasons for this in order to inform and sharpen the teaching of these subjects in the school. However, underachieving pupils are being identified more carefully. Extensive support is being provided to help them this year but school data show that gaps in the progress and attainment of boys and of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are not closing consistently across all classes.

Lesson observations during the inspection showed why this is the case. Support is not always finely attuned to each pupil's needs and consequently, some continue to make slow progress. Where attainment and progress data are collated, they are not used in conjunction with other evidence about teaching and learning, such as pupils' work in their books. Tracking the impact of the range of additional support being delivered has not been done, so leaders do not know how beneficial it is to pupils' learning.

The progress of disadvantaged pupils is compared with that of others in school, but this is not routinely compared with national data. This, too, hinders the provision of appropriate support to improve outcomes for pupils. Interventions to support disadvantaged pupils are planned, but actions to evaluate the impact of these are limited because clear success criteria are not established at the outset.

There are some signs of improvements for younger pupils. More accurate and thorough entry assessments in the early years are being supported by regular checks within school and through external moderation. Following a significant decline in 2014 in the number of pupils reaching the national average in the Year 1 phonics screening, the review of the teaching of early reading is improving outcomes

for pupils. Their progress is now tracked regularly and support given to those pupils who need it. In the early years there were good examples of early writing and writing that was developing at a rapid pace.

The quality of teaching

The school's action plan identified how leaders intended to support teachers in developing their skills of planning for the needs of all pupils, marking and questioning. However, little of this work has been completed or reviewed. As a result, initiatives introduced for teaching mathematics and writing do not have firm foundations to build on. Consequently, they are only having an impact in some year groups. The school has clear targets for improvements in teaching but these have not been met.

Lesson observations during this inspection indicate some small improvements in the quality of teaching in the past few weeks, as noted in the school's recent reviews. Nonetheless, there is little that is good and much that requires further improvement. Pupils in Key Stage 2 say that they are learning more in their classes this year and that they and their teachers want them to achieve their best.

Teachers are still getting to grips with changes the school has introduced to the teaching of writing and their confidence to adapt strategies to the needs of the pupils is still developing. There is good practice in planning lessons so that they deepen learning in some classes but this is not consistent. Tasks in lessons and in small support groups are usually explained well by teachers and teaching assistants at the outset. Pupils knew what they had to do in response to the tasks set during lessons, although they could not always explain what they were learning or what was expected of them. During lessons, pupils' progress slowed because learning was not checked effectively to ensure that tasks continued to be pitched appropriately and that the level of challenge for each pupil remained just right to promote rapid progress. In the majority of lessons across all key stages, there is not enough guidance to pupils about what a good piece of work looks like. Effective learning took place when clear guidance was given throughout lessons and criteria for success were shared with pupils from the outset. The extent to which tasks are adapted to match pupils' individual needs is limited. Pupils who need additional support are being given it within lessons, but they are often working on the same task as others. There were few examples of successful challenge for the most able pupils.

The most able pupils in Year 6 in their mathematics learning are beginning to produce good work. Their books demonstrates a secure focus on a broader range of mathematics such as applying and using number in context, problem solving and shape, space and measures. The effective use of questioning to support and challenge learning in mathematics was also evident in some, but not all, classes. The mathematics curriculum continues to be limited because number work continues to dominate. In discussions, Key Stage 2 pupils said that work in mathematics was

often too easy. Teachers' knowledge of alternative approaches to the teaching of mathematics remains limited. In lessons too much work was based around worksheets and pupils' progress slowed as they waited for assistance. Changes to the teaching of mathematics are at a very early stage so too recent to have had an impact on pupils' progress, but are recognised as positive by pupils. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects remain limited.

Marking and feedback to pupils is improving. A whole-school marking policy that requires teachers to identify what pupils have done well and what they need to improve is in place. Increasingly, staff are following this. However, there is considerable variation in the quality of comments made to extend learning. Where advice lacks a clear focus, the impact is minimal and the same errors can be seen repeated in subsequent work. Senior leaders are aware that further development is needed. However, work is marked regularly with praise and encouragement consistent features in teachers' comments. In some classes pupils are starting to receive guidance about how to improve their work further, but this is inconsistent. In the best examples, such as in Year 6 mathematics, teachers' comments supported pupils' understanding of how to make progress.

School leaders have acted to increase the level of challenge and range of reading books so that these are interesting and not too easy. However, pupils say they sometimes have to wait a long time before they are allowed to move up to the next level of reading book and this can be frustrating for them. Regular reading is taking place in lessons and pupils are becoming confident in applying strategies for reading unfamiliar words and in looking up the meaning of words that they do not know. Their knowledge of authors and of a range of genres is developing. Although the quantity of reading is increasing, the school is not keeping a close enough check on what pupils are reading to ensure that their wider learning is supported more firmly. Teachers are starting to introduce ways to engage pupils further in their writing.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The number of behavioural incidents has increased when compared to the same period last year. Information about behaviour is shared with governors. The regularity of incidents is collated, although the school is not evaluating robustly the quality of its work to promote positive behaviour and identifying where further actions are required.

Changes to the arrangements for lunch for different age groups have had a positive and calming influence on behaviour at lunchtime. However, disruption, while much reduced at this time, occasionally occurs. Pupils say that incidents of misbehaviour in lessons and at lunchtimes involve a small number of pupils. They do not like this and know it is challenged consistently. A system of rewards and sanctions is in place and pupils understand how this works; they feel this is having a positive impact on the school overall.

A review of the safeguarding policy has taken place and staff are aware of it. All staff have undergone appropriate training on how to keep children safe and this is also part of the training given to new members of staff and volunteers. Safeguarding referrals are made quickly, but follow-up checks made by the school are not recorded and records of the child receiving the appropriate support are not maintained. Risk assessments within the early years are dated and signed and the two latest ones are examples of good practice.

Attendance is declining and the school did not meet its targets for 2014. Although rates of attendance are reported to the governing body, these are not analysed sufficiently to enable governors to challenge performance rigorously, the school does not monitor and track attendance effectively. The school identifies children who regularly do not attend but they do not track their progress over time or analyse the data to identify causes.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Strategic leadership is weak. Leaders have been slow to acknowledge that the school's performance is not good enough. Leaders have not acted with urgency to ensure that plans are implemented and reviewed regularly and this has slowed the pace of improvement. On occasion, they have been deflected from their plan for improvement and additional initiatives have slowed progress. A lack of steer from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, accompanied by ad-hoc monitoring, has resulted in a lack of focus and rigour in driving the school's improvement. Teachers describe a fluctuating cycle of monitoring that can lack focus. Although the school has systems for data collection, the information gathered is not analysed in order to measure the impact of actions.

Additional support for the headteacher has been brokered by the local authority. However, strategic planning does not confidently outline how those in leadership roles are to be developed. The pace in tackling this key issue is too slow.

Although leaders have an improved knowledge of pupils' achievement, they are not analysing and using pupil performance data well enough to identify the reasons why some groups are underachieving. Systems for checking the quality of the school's work are underdeveloped. Too little observation of teaching is taking place, and when it does happen it is not focused enough on pupils' learning to identify the barriers to their progress. Staff are taking steps, through the training that has been arranged, to develop their teaching of reading and writing and are responsive and keen to improve. Responsibilities have been reassigned but the work of subject leaders is in its infancy and so little impact can be seen.

Middle leadership is in the very early stages of development, but support brokered by the local authority has been influential in improving progress in this area. Middle

leaders are keen to develop their roles, for instance through opportunities to work with leadership teams from other schools.

Teachers are responding to the support plans and opportunities to visit other schools to see good and outstanding practice in literacy and mathematics. Visits are planned well to reinforce recent training, although these have not been made available to all staff. Targets linked to the management of teachers' performance are not sharply focused on the impact teaching has on the achievement of individual classes and groups of pupils.

The inspection in June 2014 recommended reviews of pupil premium and governance which have now been completed. However, the reports have only recently been received by the school and so action has yet to be planned.

Although the governing body is receiving more information than was previously the case, because this is not analysed smartly it is not providing the insights governors need to be able to hold school leaders fully to account for actions to improve safeguarding, teaching, achievement and behaviour. Nonetheless, decisions by the governing body are now more directly linked to provision for literacy, mathematics and safeguarding and this is helping to give governors a better understanding of what is taking place in school. For example, governors can now describe the process and purpose of the single central record. They have undergone safer recruitment training but currently devolve all responsibility for recruitment to the headteacher. The child protection policy has been reviewed recently but has not as yet been distributed to all stakeholders. Not all policies have been checked and some are out of date. The school's website does not meet statutory requirements.

Governors are starting to track data about pupils' progress. They are aware that Year 6 still have much ground to gain and say they do not want to be in the position of rapid catch-up again.

External support

The local authority is not keeping a close enough eye on the progress the school is making. Although officers have provided useful advice and support on teaching and learning, staffing, target-setting and attendance matters, they have not challenged the school effectively. Support and training have enabled the school to introduce changes to the teaching of writing and mathematics. Work with individual teachers is helping the school to improve the quality of teaching, although this contribution is set in a context of overall improvement that is too slow.