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25 February 2015

Mrs L Nash
The Headteacher
Delaware Community Primary School
Drakewalls
Gunnislake
PL18 9EN

Dear Mrs Nash

Special measures monitoring inspection of Delaware Community Primary School

Following my visit with Julie Dyer, Associate Inspector, to your school on 24 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 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 making reasonable 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 Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - making use of the wider expertise available within the federation and providing appropriate training to enable teachers to become as effective as possible
 - supporting teachers so that they know how to best help pupils improve their skills in punctuation, spelling and, particularly, in extended writing
 - ensuring that teachers all use the same methods for teaching phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) and provide appropriate challenge for more able readers
 - making sure that pupils have more opportunities to cover topics that include suitable science and humanities work.
- Raise the achievement of pupils to at least the standards expected nationally by:
 - ensuring that children in Reception are better prepared for joining Year 1 by increasing the focus on developing the skills that support work in the use of number, and in reading and writing
 - setting work at the right level for the most able pupils so they are challenged to fulfil their potential
 - developing the monitoring of the progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who attract the pupil premium to ensure they are narrowing the attainment gaps with other pupils
 - improving pupils' skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics throughout the school so they achieve well regardless of their background, ability or starting point.
- Ensure that standards of behaviour are equally high in every classroom and with every member of staff by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are engaging and interesting for pupils
 - making sure that the new behaviour policy is applied consistently across the school.
- Ensure that school leaders and governors are contributing strongly and equally effectively to improving outcomes rapidly for pupils by:
 - appointing a suitable permanent headteacher at the earliest opportunity
 - challenging weak performance through regular and rigorous checking of the school's work
 - supporting the key subject leaders in English and mathematics to lead improvement in their subjects
 - developing subject leaders' understanding of how to use the information resulting from checks on pupils' progress to improve the quality of teaching
 - undertaking regular checks of teaching in all subjects, modelling best practice, and identifying appropriate training opportunities for all staff.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 February 2015

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, a representative of the local authority and representatives from the governing body. Inspectors also met with a group of pupils to review their work in books and with a group of parents.

Context

A Key Stage 2 teacher has recently completed a phased return to full-time work.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Senior and middle leaders' regular checks on pupils' learning confirm that most individuals and groups of pupils are now making better progress and that underachievement is being successfully tackled. This is particularly the case for older pupils in Key Stage 2 where most are now making good progress especially in developing their reading and writing skills. Similarly, in the early years, children are making good progress because teachers ensure children enjoy their learning and provide them with exciting learning activities, such as making spells in cauldrons. These activities are carefully structured by adults to help children develop their language skills and enable them to talk positively about what they are learning. As a result, children are on track to achieve their early learning goals by the end of the summer term. Pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress, especially in developing their reading and writing skills. Teachers effectively build on pupils' previous learning and ensure pupils practise reading daily. Teachers challenge, as well as support, pupils to achieve their best. This was evident in a writing lesson where the teacher's skilful questioning encouraged a pupil to work out and explain to the class how to use a time connective when writing a report.

Teachers' confidence in teaching mathematics has improved as a result of effective training since the monitoring inspection. Already the work seen in pupils' books indicates the pupils are beginning to make better progress in acquiring their numeracy skills. In addition, pupils say they are enjoying mathematics lessons more. The recent checks on pupils' learning also indicate the most-able pupils are beginning to make better progress in all subjects. The progress of the few disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs is also improving and is now more typically in line with their peers.

The quality of teaching

Teachers' efforts to improve the quality and range of lessons taught throughout the school have begun to pay dividends. In the early years, children frequently work collaboratively or on tasks that are tailored to meet their individual learning needs. For example, children in the outdoor learning environment were very well guided

and supported by a teaching assistant to develop their vocabulary and team work as they checked the engines of cars and washed them in the class 'garage'. The confidence of teachers and teaching assistants continues to strengthen as they draw on the expertise of leaders and subject specialists in partner schools or from colleagues from within the federation in order to improve the quality of their teaching provision. Frequent checks by senior leaders are helping to ensure that actions are aimed precisely at areas of weakness. As a result, teachers receive feedback and professional support that is helping to strengthen their teaching skills. Leaders have recently introduced a whole school focus on developing teachers' mathematical subject knowledge. This has begun improve the progress pupils are making in mathematics' lessons. For example, older pupils showed their developing understanding and ability to identify accurately three dimensional shapes from two dimensional images as a result of their teacher's secure subject knowledge and confident questioning.

The school has also adopted a consistent approach to monitoring pupils' progress in writing. The work seen in pupils' books shows the pupils write frequently for a range of audiences. Pupils who spoke with inspectors referred to their writing records to illustrate the progress they were making in their writing and the standards they are working towards. Work seen by inspectors in pupils' books confirms teachers' high expectations. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide useful feedback comments that help pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve. Pupils write regularly for a range of audiences and are now given frequent opportunities to respond to their teachers' marking.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils typically demonstrate good attitudes to learning in lessons. This is because teachers plan lessons that provide pupils with interesting tasks that motivate and keep them engaged in learning. For example, in a Key Stage 2 science lesson, the teacher's skilful use of modern technology enhanced pupils' interest and promoted sustained concentration as the pupils learnt about the life cycle of amphibians. The school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour is consistently applied by all adults. The pupils who spoke with inspectors said they enjoy coming to school and that they rarely get distracted by other pupils behaving inappropriately in lessons. Pupils are clear about the rewards and sanctions used by the school to promote their good behaviour. All pupils possess a behaviour log book which they complete each day. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were able to show how 20 consecutive good entries in their behaviour logs would result in a reward from the headteacher's 'treasure chest'. All adults ensure the school's 'diamond rules' are understood by everyone. Positive attitudes to learning are reinforced meaningfully by teachers throughout lessons. Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. Parents who met with inspectors said they appreciated the school's structured and consistent approach to securing pupils' good behaviour. However, they are concerned about the ease of access on and off the school site through two gates that are not currently kept locked during lessons. A few parents also felt more could be done by the school to improve the supervision of pupils at lunchtimes. Pupils' attendance

remains in line with the national average. This is because the school works diligently with parents to promote regular attendance and celebrates pupils' good attendance in assemblies.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher and senior leaders from within the federation continue to maintain a determined focus on securing improvements in teaching, behaviour and leadership. For example, a programme of training to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils might achieve, as well as the quality of their own practice. Members of the senior leadership team also make regular visits to classes to check on the quality of teaching and learning. They use this information to provide additional support where it is required. Governors too are visiting the school regularly to talk with pupils and check on the work of the school. The governing body is kept regularly informed by senior leaders, which is allowing governors to ask more insightful questions and so hold the school more effectively to account.

Senior leaders' rigorous checks on teaching, alongside a well planned programme of professional development for teachers and teaching assistants, is helping to secure improved teaching and learning throughout the school. Staff who met with inspectors all said they appreciated the professional development they were receiving. Although there remain pockets of underachievement, especially in the middle years, overall the school's most recent checks on lessons confirm pupils' improving rates of progress are gathering momentum. However, the structure and working practices of the governing body are not yet secure. In particular, the leadership roles of the executive headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body are unclear.

External support

The local authority continues to provide effective support and challenge to the school. It has successfully supported the school through a period where there have been many changes in teaching staff. The local authority continues to broker training for teachers to strengthen their expertise in English and mathematics. Teachers are working closely with colleagues from a nearby support school and from within the federation to check that they are marking pupils' work to the correct standard. The governing body continues to be supported appropriately by the local authority in the process of converting to an academy.