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19 March 2015

Paul Burgess  
Headteacher  
Dunston Primary and Nursery School  
Dunston Lane  
Newbold  
Chesterfield  
S41 8EY

Dear Mr Burgess

**Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Dunston Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 17 March 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 was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in November 2013. 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 the serious weaknesses designation. It is my recommendation that the next inspection of the school be carried out under the provision of section 5 of the Education Act.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults for Derbyshire County Council.

Yours sincerely

Terry Holland  
**Additional Inspector**

The letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body or equivalent
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For academies [[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)]

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2013**

- Ensure that teaching is good or better, so that all groups of pupils make at least good progress and their attainment rises in mathematics and writing at Key Stages 1 and 2, by:
  - eradicating any inadequate teaching
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - improving teachers' use of assessments, so that tasks in lessons are always sufficiently challenging for all ability groups, particularly the most able, and work is closely matched to pupils' needs
  - ensuring that pupils always receive feedback on their work that gives them very clear information on what they need to do to improve
  - giving pupils clear guidance in lessons that will help them to assess the quality of their own work, so that they become more independent learners and able to accelerate their own progress
  - ensure that teaching is well-paced and engages all pupils to improve their behaviour.
- Raise the achievement of all pupils in writing and mathematics, including those with disabilities and who have special educational needs, so that at least average percentages of pupils meet and exceed the amount of progress expected by the end of Year 6, by:
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to use and improve their writing skills in subjects other than English
  - providing pupils with a variety of opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to real-life problem-solving activities.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
  - refining the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team, so that they have a clearer impact on pupils' outcomes
  - developing the expertise of those who lead subjects and key stages in monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
  - ensuring that governors fully put in place, and evaluate the effect of, their recent action plan so that they are better able to hold the school to account for pupils' progress and teachers' performance
  - creating specific measurable criteria in the school improvement plan so that the leadership team and governors can fully evaluate the impact of actions the school has taken.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 17 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher and senior leadership team, the middle leaders responsible for coordinating the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stages 1 and 2, and for mathematics across the school, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, and a representative of the local authority. He observed three lessons jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The inspector scrutinised documents including data on students' achievement and progress, senior leaders' evaluations of the school's work, reports from the regular programme of monitoring and review of the school's progress, the latest school improvement plan and the local authority's action plan to support the school.

### **Context**

There have been no important changes to staffing, or the school's status, since the last monitoring visit in October 2014.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership. The restructured senior and middle leadership teams are now well established and have a clear view of what needs to be done to continue to improve learning. Pupils' achievement across the school continues to improve as a result. This is evident in the improved results in national tests in 2014, and in the school's detailed tracking and progress data.

In 2014, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in the national 'phonics' tests by the end of Key Stage 1 was above average. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with national averages. At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics rose substantially, although it remained below that found nationally. Nonetheless, the impact of the school's work was evident in the progress pupils made from their individual starting points. This is in sharp contrast to the inconsistency in pupils' progress evident at the time of the section 5 inspection. The majority of pupils exceeded the progress expected nationally. In particular, the progress made by disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium funding, and by those with special educational needs, was significantly better than that of similar pupils nationally. The gap between their attainment and those of their peers in the school is clearly closing.

The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment, however, was below average and the achievement of the most able pupils throughout the school remains a clear target for further improvement. In order to achieve this, the school has set targets for all pupils' progress that are higher than those expected nationally.

Current data show that the majority of pupils throughout the school are now making good or better progress.

Other actions to address the areas for development identified by the previous section 5 inspection are now also firmly embedded. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching are well established and the quality of teaching has continued to improve. The small amount of inadequate teaching that existed at the time of the section 5 inspection was quickly eradicated. The school is providing well-targeted support, including input from the local authority, to ensure that all teaching becomes consistently good or better.

The restructured and enhanced senior and middle leadership provides a firm base for the school to improve further. Teachers and middle leaders are now increasingly confident in analysing the school's robust assessment data on pupils' progress. This has helped teachers to improve the ways in which learning is planned and organised, and pupils are grouped, to ensure that pupils of all abilities are given work that engages and challenges them to achieve to the best of their ability. The impact of this can be seen in the progress that pupils are now making in their learning.

The governing body continues to provide good support to the school. With support from the local authority, and through a carefully planned training programme, the governing body has increased the balance of expertise of its members. As a result, governors are now well informed and fully aware of their responsibilities in helping the school to continue to improve and to achieve its aim of excellence. They are directly involved in the monitoring and evaluation of specific priorities for improvement and in supporting the new management and curriculum structures.

The school is a caring community. It is a happy and friendly place where pupils take responsibility for caring for each other and very evidently feel safe. The great majority of parents who completed the online Parent View survey agree and are clear that they feel this is once again a good school.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, supported by key senior staff, has enabled leaders throughout the school to grow in confidence and to press forward determinedly with their improvement programme. As a result, pupils are making significantly better progress than at the time of the section 5 inspection.
- Senior and middle leaders have been successful in ensuring that staff are involved and have a sense of ownership in the developments and actions to improve performance across the school.
- There is now an established culture of collective responsibility and accountability for the quality of teaching and learning and for the school's continuing improvement.
- The programme of half-termly pupil progress reviews between each teacher and senior leaders and regular checking of pupils' achievement and progress in

individual classes, across year groups and the school as a whole, are proving very effective and underpinning improvement.

- The school's assessment and monitoring information is detailed and robust. The greater emphasis on individual students' progress has helped teachers to set learning targets that challenge and stretch pupils more effectively. As a result, pupils' expectations of their performance and progress are higher.
- The innovative use of the 'lesson study' programme is helping staff to collectively evaluate and refine performance in areas identified as key to improvement.
- Careful matching of provision and specific support for individual pupils, including those who have special educational needs, is having a significant impact on improving pupils' attainment and progress.
- The leadership and management team has resolutely pursued improvements through monitoring of teaching. This is well integrated into a robust approach to performance management. Teaching generally is improving. Senior leaders' lesson observations give an accurate view of the effectiveness of teaching.
- Governors are kept well informed directly by the headteacher and senior leaders, and through their increased engagement with middle leaders on the performance of, and planned developments for, their areas of responsibility.
- In the midst of necessary change, the school has strengthened its support and care for its pupils, and re-established an ethos where children are happy, and happy to learn.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The school and governors are aware that the progress of the most able pupils and potential higher attainers still needs a continuing focus and consistent improvement.
- Leaders are aware that the performance of some staff continues to require improvement in order to reach the challenging targets set by the school.

### **External support**

The local authority (LA) has provided very good support. As a result, leaders and staff at all levels, are now better able to drive improvement forward. The school's link adviser has provided support to the senior leaders through his quality assurance activities to help strengthen teaching and learning, the rigorous half-termly school progress review programme and his 'in-house' training. His support has helped the governing body to make rapid improvements in its practices. The local authority has also provided support and advice from its specialist advisers and consultants for teaching, learning and assessment in areas such as mathematics, literacy and phonics, and, currently, in supporting teaching that requires improvement. The school and governors have also benefited from the LA's human resources, finance and governor support services. The link with the successful local school, arranged by the local authority, was effective in providing support in the early stages after the last section. The school is now actively forging its own links with other schools offering best practice in the authority. The school's improvement over the past 18

months is exemplified by its work in developing ways to better monitor the progress of pupils, and in providing the individual support needed to assure that progress. As a result, the school is being used by the LA as a centre of best practice to support others.