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Mrs Beryce Nixon
Executive Headteacher
Edlington Victoria Primary School
Victoria Road
Edlington
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN12 1BN

Dear Mrs Nixon

Special measures monitoring inspection of Edlington Victoria Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 May 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2015.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the executive headteacher, the leaders for literacy and numeracy and a group of senior leaders from the partner school. I also spoke to the new head of school. I met with the Chair and vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's post-inspection development plan were evaluated. I reviewed the minutes of the recent governing body meetings and looked at Year 6 and Year 2 literacy and numeracy books. You accompanied me on a tour of the school during which I spoke to pupils.

Context

Since the inspection, a new executive headteacher has been attached to the school. She is a national leader of education leading a national support school, Hilltop School. A new head of school has been appointed recently, to start in September 2015. The school is in the process of recruiting a new leader of early years. The governing body will be replaced with an Interim Executive Board (IEB) as of the 1 June 2015. One teacher has left the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The executive headteacher, and other members of staff interviewed, have a thorough understanding of the challenges facing the school. The executive headteacher has concentrated her attention this term on gaining an accurate view of the performance of the school and auditing strengths and areas to improve. The post-inspection development plan is focused on the areas for improvement and identifies clearly what is going to be done and by when. However, the actions are not always linked to specific and measureable success criteria related to pupils' progress. In addition, plans do not address comprehensively the improvements needed in progress made by different groups of pupils.

There is a clear focus in the plans on providing bespoke support for members of staff to enable them to improve their practice and for the pupils to make more progress in lessons. This support has started and plans are in place to continue it into the next academic year. The support is based on an accurate evaluation of teaching and of pupils' progress across year groups. Much of the support will be provided by Hilltop school. The Hilltop team is ambitious, able to evaluate accurately and flexible in their support. The executive headteacher has sought the support of early years' consultants to develop provision for the youngest children in school. Together, the executive headteacher and consultants have made big changes to the early years' learning environment, making it a stimulating environment which better facilitates learning.

The leadership team has introduced new systems to track accurately the progress of pupils and is rising to the challenge of ensuring consistency in assessment. Leaders are holding teachers to account more rigorously for pupils' progress, as a result of better monitoring. School leaders are in the early stages of supporting teachers in the development of the curriculum. As a consequence, leaders are beginning to see an increase in pupils' engagement and achievement, particularly in Key Stage 1. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising. However, there is variability in the quality of work produced by pupils. As a result of lack of consistency in expectations across the whole school, some pupils do not apply basic skills, including spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation, well in all lessons.

The leadership of reading, writing and mathematics is improving. Literacy and numeracy leaders have worked with the new leadership team to raise the expectations of what pupils should achieve, through regular monitoring of planning, books and learning in lessons. Literacy and numeracy leaders have introduced pre- and post-learning assessment tasks to ensure that the progress of pupils is measured more accurately. As a result of better information about pupils' learning, the special educational needs coordinator has put into place interventions for those pupils who are not making expected progress. It is too early to judge the impact of these interventions.

The impact of the governing body has been limited due to the replacement of it with an IEB. However, governors are keen to develop their skills by working alongside the IEB. The minutes of meetings of the governing body show that the governing body has started to ask about key areas and the progress made, but are not always challenging leaders to explain fully the impact of actions taken.

The local authority has brokered support between the new executive headteacher, and the school. The local authority has undertaken reviews of teaching and is aware of the areas to be developed. Their priority is to strengthen the leadership of the school to ensure that the support provided is focused sharply on the areas in need of improvement. The local authority has put in place a Parents' Champion but it is too early to judge the impact of this role.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. However, further action should be taken to ensure that the action plan is sharpened by reviewing the present success criteria to make sure the IEB can easily monitor progress against them in terms of pupils' progress.

The school's development plan is fit for purpose. However, the plan needs strengthening to include specific measurable criteria which relate to the progress of different groups of pupils.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Interim Director Children and Young People's Service for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector