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4 June 2015

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

Dear Mrs Mitchell

Special measures monitoring inspection of Manor Park Primary School

Following my visit with Janice Martin, Additional Inspector, to your school on 2–3 June 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 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of appropriate authority for Manor Park Primary School

cc. Peter Hay Director of Children's Services for Birmingham

cc. For Academies Department for Education

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 third monitoring inspection on 2–3 June 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair and another member of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority. All of the lessons observed during this monitoring inspection were seen jointly with the executive headteacher or the acting headteacher. Inspectors reviewed some pupils' writing; mathematics and topic work with the executive headteacher and the acting headteacher. They also took account of the 35 Ofsted staff questionnaire responses.

Context

The permanent headteacher remains absent due to ill health. She has been absent since the first week of February 2015. The headteacher of Clifton Primary, who is also a National Leader of Education, continues to work at Manor Park as the executive headteacher for two days per week. The interim executive board recently appointed one of the deputy headteachers as the acting headteacher. The second deputy headteacher remains on secondment at another local school. The teacher with responsibility for leading developments in reading and writing was absent due to ill health in early April and then went on maternity leave from May. The acting headteacher has taken on her responsibilities. Since the previous monitoring inspection, six temporary teachers have left the school. At the time of this monitoring inspection, six classes were being taught by temporary teachers. At the time of the second monitoring inspection in February 2015, seven out of the 17 classes were being taught by temporary teachers.

Following the previous monitoring inspection, the local authority significantly increased the level support for staff at Manor Park. Staff in Key Stage 1 continue to receive support from teachers at Clifton Primary School. Staff in Key Stage 2 began to receive support from teachers at Cromwell Junior and Infant School and Nursery class at the beginning of March. Staff in the early years have been receiving support from St Mary's C of E Primary and Nursery Academy.

Manor Park will convert to academy status in December 2015. REAch2 will become the sponsors for the school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain low across the school. The school's assessment information – some of which has been checked for accuracy – confirms this to be the case. Despite additional teaching support for pupils in Years 2

and 6, approximately half the pupils in these year groups are not expected to reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Although many pupils in Years 2 and 6 have made strong gains in their learning, these have not been enough to catch up on lost ground.

Work in pupils' books and visits to lessons show that pupils in the majority of classes are not making fast enough progress. This is because of continuing weaknesses in teaching. In some classes in the early years and Years 1, 2 and 6, groups of pupils are making the progress they should, and some are making good progress because of effective teaching.

In writing, pupils' sentences do not always make sense, and pupils do not use punctuation and grammar accurately or spell correctly. Although pupils are becoming better at using their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to read unfamiliar words, they do not have a secure understanding of what they are reading. In mathematics, pupils do not develop a deep enough understanding of numbers or know how to solve complex mathematical problems.

The quality of teaching

Teaching remains weak in the majority of classes. There is not enough consistently good teaching to help pupils reach higher standards and make faster progress. Despite advice and support from a number of staff from local schools, teaching is not improving quickly enough. Some teachers and teaching assistants, including those who are permanently employed by the school, are not acting on the advice they receive. Additionally, not all senior leaders make sure that teachers adhere to school policies. For instance, according to the school's policy, teachers are expected to provide pupils with regular written feedback. However, inspectors found sets of pupils' books that had not been marked for months. As a result, pupils were not sure about what they needed to do to improve their work and were repeating errors.

Teachers do not make effective use of the information they have about pupils' achievements to plan suitably challenging activities. Consequently, the activities for the most able are too easy. In contrast, activities are too difficult for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Occasionally, learning time is wasted during lessons because pupils have to wait for teachers and teaching assistants to organise the equipment that they need. Teachers do not all keep a close check on how well pupils are learning during lessons. As a result, some pupils struggle with their work, while others complete it very quickly. In one class, pupils that had finished their work drew pictures until the lesson finished. When inspectors asked what they were learning, they responded, 'Nothing'.

Presentation of pupils' work varies between classes and subjects. Teachers do not insist that pupils present their work neatly in all lessons or show pupils how they can improve their handwriting.

A few teachers in Years 1, 2 and 6 make sure that activities successfully build on what pupils already know and can do. These teachers also have high expectations of what pupils can achieve by the end of a lesson. As a consequence, increasing proportions of pupils in these year groups are making faster progress than before.

Teaching in the early years remains variable. In the reception classes, children are not always moved on to new learning as soon as they are ready for this. This hinders the progress they make. In the Nursery, children make better progress when they work with an adult. This is because adults carefully guide and support the children as they work. However, when children work on their own, they do not always make enough progress. This is because the children do not always know what they are expected to learn.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Just over 40% of staff that responded to the Ofsted questionnaire raised concerns about pupils' behaviour and the way behaviour is managed in the school. Inspectors found that pupils' behaviour has improved. School records show that the number of incidents of poor behaviour has markedly decreased and that staff respond appropriately to specific incidents. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour in lessons, around school and in the playground is much better. They were particularly positive about the rewards and the certificates that acknowledge good behaviour. Pupils confirmed that they feel safe in school and that adults respond appropriately to any concerns they may have.

In lessons, the majority of pupils listen carefully and remain focused on their work. When pupils become restless and lose interest, it is because their activities are dull. Pupils walk around the school calmly, and politely greet each other, adults and visitors. In the playground, pupils play together well and respond promptly to instructions from lunchtime supervisors.

Attendance has continued to improve. It is now in line with the national average for primary schools. Staff keep a check on pupils with low attendance and work closely with families to ensure pupils attend regularly. They follow correct procedures and notify the local authority when they intend to take pupils off the school roll. Staff also ensure that any relevant information about individual pupils is passed to the staff in the new school.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher has been unable to secure improvements in teaching and pupils' achievements. Weaknesses in leaderships, reluctance from a few staff to adapt the way in which they work, and difficulties with recruiting permanent class teachers are preventing the school from improving quickly.

The school's arrangements for managing the performance of staff remain weak. Approximately 30% of staff that responded to the staff questionnaire believe that the leaders are not doing all they can to improve teaching. The executive headteacher does not keep a close enough check on the difference that other senior leaders or teachers with specific responsibilities make to teaching and pupils' learning. Also, as previously reported, once weaknesses in teaching are identified, not all senior leaders make sure that individual teachers address them with a sense of urgency. As a consequence, many of the weaknesses in teaching that were identified at the time of the previous monitoring inspection remain.

The school's information about pupils' achievement shows that, in a number of year groups, pupils are not making enough progress. Senior leaders regularly meet with individual staff to discuss this information and the actions that will be taken to help pupils make better progress. However, these discussions are having very little impact. This is because the actions that are identified are not always appropriate, precise enough or prioritised.

The acting deputy headteacher is responsible for overseeing the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Although he organises the support for these pupils, he does not make sure that this support is helping pupils to make better progress. Neither does he check how well teachers meet the particular learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, many of these pupils continue to make inadequate progress. The teachers with responsibility for the early years and mathematics do not have the skills required to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility.

The acting headteacher has an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school. When she rightly raises concerns with individual teachers and teaching assistants about their work, and asks them to make the necessary change, not all staff take appropriate action. This unwillingness to act upon advice is contributing to the slow improvements in the school.

Pupils are continuing to be taught a range of subjects. They particularly enjoy visiting different places and learning through first-hand experiences. However, the quality of work in pupils' topics books is poor. Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning in subjects such as history are low. Pupils of different abilities are often asked to complete the same work. Also, pupils do not have regular opportunities to develop and extend their reading, writing and mathematical skills through other subjects.

Members of the interim executive board are asking searching questions about the actions being taken by senior leaders to help raise pupils' achievement. They are beginning to ask specific questions about the progress of different groups of pupils. However, they do not receive regular detailed updates about pupils' achievement.

This is preventing them from rigorously checking the impact of leaders' actions on the progress of different groups. The external review of pupil premium expenditure has been very recently completed. Interim executive board members have yet to act upon the recommendations within the report. The decision to convert to academy status is recent. The Chair of the Interim Executive Board is liaising with REAch2 in order to ensure a smooth transition.

External support

Despite the high level of support arranged by the local authority from local schools, this support has had a limited impact. Teaching has not improved enough since the last monitoring inspection, and pupils in the majority of classes are continuing to make inadequate progress. In March 2015, the local authority arranged for a review of the school's work in order to check the progress being made against the areas for improvement identified in the full inspection in May 2014. This review is generous in places. For instance, 'teaching improving slowly' and 'leadership improving in small steps' are identified as strengths. The report correctly identified that rates of progress are slow and inconsistent.

Senior leaders have arranged for the Birmingham Prevent and Resilience Officer to provide training for staff on how to keep pupils safe from the potential risk of extremism.

Priorities for further improvement

- As a matter of urgency, the local authority should strengthen the leadership of the school.