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9 July 2015

Ms Stella Porter
The Headteacher
Lodge Farm Junior Mixed and Infant School
Willenhall School Sports College Campus
Furzebank Way
Willenhall
WV12 4BU

Dear Ms Porter

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lodge Farm Junior Mixed and Infant School

Following my visit with Linda Rowley, Additional Inspector, to your school on 7 and 8 July 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2013. 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 has deteriorated since the previous 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 (IEB) and the Director of Children's Services for Walsall.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2013

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching across the school, but especially in Key Stage 2, so that it is typically good and better by:
 - ensuring teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan challenging lessons for all groups of pupils, including boys, the most and least able, those eligible for additional funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - ensuring teachers question pupils more effectively to check on their progress during lessons and adapt work if necessary
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to assess their own and their peers' work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work by themselves and develop independent learning skills
 - ensuring pupils know their targets, and that marking is accurate and provides pupils with good guidance as to how they can improve their work.
- Raise the attainment of pupils, in English and mathematics, especially for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for additional funding, in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - ensuring additional adults are deployed more effectively to raise pupils' attainment and progress
 - improving the teaching of mathematics to ensure lessons move at a brisk pace and work is challenging
 - improving the quality of writing, especially for boys and more able pupils
 - developing a reading programme that promotes more reading at school and at home, with
 - better recording of individual pupils' reading and comprehension skills, and ensure adults listen more to pupils reading
 - improving the use of phonics across the school and ensure teachers correct errors in pupils' oral work.
- Improve pupils' attendance and behaviour by:
 - raising levels of attendance through the rigorous and consistent application of the new attendance policy
 - ensuring all staff, especially in Years 3 and 4, apply new policies and procedures for managing behaviour consistently
 - making sure there are consistent expectations for good behaviour in lessons and that any low-level disruption or lack of respect shown is swiftly addressed.
- Improve the quality of leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring senior and middle leaders and the governing body undertake robust checks on pupils' progress and teachers' performance to secure a sustained rise in pupils' attainment
 - ensuring all assessments are accurate, regular and effectively moderated

- ensuring governors robustly check that information and data presented to them is accurate
- ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils, so that there are equal opportunities for all to make good progress
- ensuring that the impact of additional sports funding is evaluated
- acting on the recommendations in the local authority's recent review of governance.

Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 7 and 8 July 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, school improvement partner (SIP), members of the interim executive board (IEB), the learning mentor and members of staff. They observed teaching in all classes; some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. They examined the school's data on pupils' academic progress and standards. They examined pupils' books, reading diaries, heard pupils read and observed them at play and around the school. Inspectors scrutinised the school's behaviour records and those for exclusions and attendance. They examined the school's records to ensure the safe recruitment of staff.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, two new senior leaders have taken up post and the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team have been reorganised. Seven new teachers have joined the school, including two newly qualified teachers who are working alongside other staff. One teacher and two higher level teaching assistants, who were on long term sick leave, have left the school. During this inspection, the deputy headteacher was on sickness leave.

There has been further building work and refurbishment across the school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Standards remain low overall, but there are pockets of improvement. Standards are rising in the early years. The unvalidated results of the 2015 Early Years Foundation Stage assessments indicate that the proportion of children attaining a good level of development (64.4%) is higher this year and is likely to be in line with the national figure. In 2014, the national figure was 61%.

The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the 2015 Year 1 phonic check also rose this year to 74%, in line with the 2014 national figure.

In the 2015 Key Stage 1 national assessments, there was a rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the lowest level, but too few pupils gained the expected and higher levels in reading and mathematics. The figures for writing are slightly better, but still too few pupils achieved the higher levels.

The disappointing Key Stage 1 results reflect the significant deterioration observed in lessons and in pupils' work. At the previous monitoring inspection, in March 2015, inspectors described how for too many Key Stage 1 pupils their progress in reading had stalled. Since then, nothing has been done to remedy the situation. During this

visit it was very apparent that for a large number of pupils their progress had declined considerably. Many who were on track to attain higher levels in reading have not done so and have fallen back. Examination of pupils' reading diaries reveals that, as identified in March 2015, too few pupils read enough books over the course of a week and too many have books that are too easy. For example, one Year 1 boy, whose progress in reading in the first half of the year had been accelerating, was reading a thin, simple book, but was able to read Ted Hughes' *The Iron Man* with no hesitation and could also read a non-fiction book, *The Stegosaurus*.

All groups of pupils in Key Stage 1 have been affected by this deterioration.

The good reading behaviours that pupils in Key Stage 1 had been developing have been lost as staff have given up on the agreed whole school routines, including training pupils to sit quietly and read for increasingly sustained periods of time. As a result, pupils currently in Year 2 will now move up into Year 3 without this important skill. Yet, inspectors and the headteacher observed children in Reception class sitting reading around tables, reading in pairs.

In the previous monitoring inspection, inspectors also noted that adults' mathematics subject knowledge was weak. During this current inspection, inspectors again observed instances of incorrect information being taught to pupils in Reception and Year 1, leading to their confusion. The paucity of adults' subject knowledge has a direct impact on the children's progress and, to a large extent, explains why so few pupils are reaching the higher levels. In the case of a pupil in one class, the teacher was unable to deepen and extend the child's conceptual understanding about something he had worked out for himself – that a square is a special type of rectangle. Instead, he was given information that was simply incorrect and not mathematical.

The unvalidated results of the 2015 Key Stage 2 national tests are lower than those for 2014 and are likely to be below the national floor targets. Of pupils, 75% gained Level 4 in reading, 50% did so in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and 60% in mathematics.

Across Key Stage 2, most pupils are making expected progress in reading and mathematics, but only a small minority is making better than expected progress. Some have regressed since the previous monitoring inspection. Rates of progress have slowed down significantly. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were not moved on quickly enough when they had shown that they had acquired a skill and, as noted in March 2015, there are still too few pupils reading enough books at an appropriate level of challenge. All groups of pupils have been affected by the general reversal of progress. In some classes, the majority of pupils have regressed.

Across the school, the focus on writing is paying dividends. There is a sharper focus on presentation and all pupils now have a clear example in the front of their books of how their work should be set out. Pupils in Year 3 proudly explained why they were allowed to write in ink and showed the inspector the evident improvement in their written work. Pupils enjoy using the wider range of high quality texts as a stimulus for their writing, for example play scripts and counter arguments against HS2.

The quality of teaching

There has been a deterioration in the quality of teaching since the previous monitoring inspection, most notably in the teaching of reading in Key Stage 1 and in the management of behaviour in lessons.

There has been an unravelling of agreed whole school procedures for the teaching of reading in Key Stage 1. Inspectors observed reading sessions in three Key Stage 1 classes. Each was conducted completely differently, using different approaches. Teachers' expectations of what pupils in Years 1 and 2 can do and achieve are far too low. In sharp contrast, the teaching of reading in Key Stage 2 is well embedded and more effective. Nevertheless, even here, the level of challenge could be greater in some classes.

Across the school, engagement with parents is poor and opportunities are lost to work with them to support their children's education. For example, too many pupils now do not bring their reading diaries into school daily; so staff have accepted this as the norm for these pupils instead of incentivising them and their parents to develop good habits.

The new curriculum is popular with pupils. They enjoy the topics covered and are gaining new knowledge. For example, Year 3 pupils demonstrated good recall of information about Iron Age forts.

Classrooms are now well resourced. All pupils have access to dictionaries, thesauri and number equipment and a wider range of books. Inspectors observed good modelling by one teacher of how to write a play script and, in the case of another, a strong explanation about how to convert 0.454 kilograms into grams and round up or down. The school has purchased a new scheme to support mental arithmetic and the daily lessons are having a positive impact.

Individual targets for pupils with special educational needs are clearly written so that pupils understand them and act upon them.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour has deteriorated in some classes since the previous monitoring inspection. Inspectors observed a lot of low level disruption and off-task behaviour in lessons that went unchallenged by staff. They also observed over-boisterous play outside and a physical assault on one boy by a group of boys.

Not all staff, including support staff, take full responsibility for managing challenging behaviour. The impact of further staff changes has been mixed. Some new colleagues have very good behaviour management strategies, but others are less effective.

The school grounds are unkempt and unsafe. There are broken tins and rubbish on the site, particularly near the early years area and Key Stage 2.

Attendance has improved but remains below the national figure. The number of pupils who are late is rising, but this reflects more parents making sure that their children turn up at school rather than stay at home because they are late.

The number of pupils who are persistently absent is declining. The school has made some progress in incentivising these pupils to come to school, by, for example, providing them with an alarm clock. But much more could, and still needs to, be done. The school does not use the range of strategies that most schools use to tempt and persuade these vulnerable pupils into school. The learning mentor who oversees this work is doing a good job with limited direction and support. He has successfully engaged with some parents about their children's behaviour.

Exclusions remain high. In the current academic year 2014–15, there have been 19 exclusions, for eight pupils, of which two have been permanent exclusions.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the school has appointed two new senior leaders and restructured the roles and responsibilities of others on the senior team, in addition to the appointment of several new staff and existing long-term supply staff.

There is currently no discernible, positive impact of the new leadership team. The quality of the teaching of reading has declined significantly in Key Stage 1, despite this concern being identified during the previous monitoring visit. Many pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics has regressed.

The headteacher does not lead by example. She does not monitor rigorously enough what is happening in classrooms and make absolutely clear to staff that agreed whole-school policies must be carried out.

The headteacher is not aware of what is going on in too many instances. For example, she was unaware that many pupils, regularly, do not bring into school their reading diaries; she was unaware of the type and level of books that pupils were reading and she did not know that some pupils regularly miss physical education (PE) because they do not have their PE kit with them.

Senior leaders' self-evaluation is over generous. They believe that, over time, the quality of teaching is good and that some is outstanding. Senior leaders do not accept the validity of their standardised tests that show that many pupils have regressed.

Members of the IEB are knowledgeable, aware of the improvements that have been made, but are also aware of a reduction in pace. They continue to have high expectations for the school and records show that they challenge the headteacher regularly and about the right things. They do not always have an accurate picture of the school's progress because information from the headteacher is not timely or accurate enough.

External support

The local authority school improvement partner has an accurate understanding of the school's leadership. The impact of his support and challenge has been limited.