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9 November 2015

Mrs B Nixon and Mrs E Clark
Edlington Victoria Primary School
Victoria Road
Edlington
Doncaster
DN12 1BN

Dear Mrs Nixon and Mrs Clark

Special measures monitoring inspection of Edlington Victoria Primary School

Following my visit with Peter Heaton, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 20 and 21 October 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2015. 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school may 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 Education Board and the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2015.

- Urgently improve teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, so that it is consistently good or better and ensures that pupils in all year groups make at least good progress in all subjects by ensuring that:
 - questioning is used well to check on learning so that tasks can be reshaped when pupils have not fully understood the concepts being taught
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - the work set is appropriately challenging for all pupils, but particularly for the most able, and that pupils do not repeat work they have already successfully completed
 - the work of learning support assistants is carefully planned and is consistently effective
 - children in the early years are helped to develop their ideas when they are working by themselves.
- Raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics specifically by making sure that:
 - all teaching staff model precisely the sounds that letters make in their teaching of phonics
 - pupils develop the reading skills they need to help them elicit the right information to best support the topics they are exploring
 - pupils develop a secure understanding of number and place value and the application of calculations when solving problems
 - teachers' marking and feedback clearly tell pupils about how to improve their work further, including identifying basic errors in their writing and that pupils have the time they need to respond to that marking
 - pupils develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics when working in other subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - the monitoring of teaching is rigorous and accurate and leads to swift improvements to the quality of teaching
 - the skills of middle leaders are urgently improved so that they can rigorously monitor provision in their areas of responsibility and secure essential improvements
 - teacher assessments accurately reflect what pupils can do and inform subsequent planning
 - pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs receive effective support which is closely monitored and enables them to make at least good progress

- the learning and progress of the disadvantaged pupils is effectively supported and closely monitored so that those who are at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and given the help they need to achieve well
- governors play a more active role in leading school developments and checking that these secure good achievement for all pupils
- school leaders, including governors, monitor the impact of those funds specifically designated for the support of disadvantaged pupils
- governors implement the recommendations of the review of governance that they have recently undertaken.

A further external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 20–21 October 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, middle leaders, a representative of the local authority and members of the interim education board (IEB). Meetings were held with pupils and teaching staff. Inspectors spoke with parents at the school gate and with pupils in lessons and around school.

Context

There have been several changes to staffing since the previous monitoring visit in May 2015. A new head of school took up post in September 2015 and the leadership team was expanded to include an acting deputy headteacher. Some teachers have changed year groups and two teachers left and have been replaced.

The school is currently supported by Hilltop Primary School in Edlington. The executive headteacher is the headteacher at Hilltop Primary School. The IEB has delegated powers for the governance of Edlington Victoria Primary School and is seeking a long-term partnership with Hilltop.

Outcomes for pupils

As a result of better-quality teaching, particularly in phonics (the sounds that letters make) and reading, overall achievement is improving. However, there are still areas of concern. Girls are still making better progress than boys in reading and writing. Disadvantaged pupils and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make less progress than others in reading, writing and mathematics.

Attainment of current pupils is higher in reading and writing than in mathematics. A large majority of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining levels expected for their age. However, in other classes, less than half of pupils are currently attaining expected levels. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are now attaining levels broadly in line with national averages although fewer pupils are reaching higher levels. Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowing at Key Stage 1. The proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics check fell in 2014, but lessons observed in school show many improvements in teaching that are helping pupils to learn and use phonics in their reading and writing.

There is rapid improvement in achievement of pupils in the early years. Children enter school below the level of development typically expected for their age. The school has done much to improve provision to help children learn when they are working by themselves, leading to the rapid progress of children in the early years.

As a result, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class is now close to national averages.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching has improved considerably under the direction of the executive headteacher. Teachers have high expectations of the quality of work that pupils will produce and handwriting and presentation are much improved. Work in books shows that pupils are making progress, but the rate of progress is not consistent across all classes. Teachers question effectively to involve pupils and, as a result, pupils are willing to contribute in lessons and are more positive about their learning. School leaders recognise that more can be done to improve teachers' questioning so that the most-able pupils are challenged to think more deeply and attain higher levels, particularly in mathematics.

Teachers' marking, in line with the new marking policy, is helping pupils to improve their work, particularly in writing. Marking in mathematics is less well developed and consequently pupils are not developing reasoning skills well enough. School leaders have introduced pre- and post-learning assessments to establish what pupils know, so that teachers can accurately teach to the needs of different groups of pupils. This is in its early stages, but already, in some lessons, the setting of more appropriate tasks is enabling pupils to achieve more and pupils say that they can see how well they are doing as a result of the 'cold and hot' tasks.

The quality of support provided by additional adults is improving. Due to well-planned training for support staff, provided by school leaders, improvements can be seen in the teaching of reading and phonics in particular. The subject knowledge of some additional adults is less well developed, particularly in mathematics, and as a consequence not all pupils are supported effectively to make rapid progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

As a result of consistently high expectations, pupils display good behaviour around school and in lessons. Pupils understand the school rewards and sanctions systems and pupils feel they are dealt with fairly by all staff. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong: one pupil commented 'teachers just want to brighten up our day'. Although a small percentage of parents express concerns about bullying, pupils are confident that persistent misbehaviour or bullying will be dealt with promptly and fairly by the school.

In discussion, older pupils showed good understanding of British values, and displays around school reinforce learning about moral issues.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- The executive headteacher and head of school have done a remarkable job in raising expectations of pupils and improving the quality of teaching across the whole school. Teachers speak highly of the supportive way in which they have been helped to develop their practice.
- The leadership team rigorously monitors all aspects of the school's work and is correctly prioritising areas for improvement in order to ensure long-term sustainability of those improvements. The executive headteacher is highly analytical and uses information from monitoring and evaluation to determine what area the school will tackle next.
- Detailed plans to improve teaching and provision are underpinning a rapid rate of improvement. Leaders are accurately evaluating the quality of teaching, ensuring that the focus remains firmly on improving learning for all pupils.
- Middle leaders are encouraged by the training they have received and appreciate support from senior leaders. Middle leaders value the opportunity to grow under the close guidance of experienced middle leaders from Hilltop Primary School. As a result of this mentoring, middle leaders are beginning to monitor the effectiveness of teaching in their subject areas and are starting to develop the skills they need to guide and support other teachers more effectively.
- Members of the IEB, formed in June 2015, have the knowledge and experience needed to fully understand the position of the school. A planned review of governance coincided with this monitoring visit and was postponed to a future date. The IEB meets regularly, maintaining a focus on checking the impact of the school's work to improve. Governors understand their role in monitoring the spending of additional funding, and minutes of meetings show the IEB thoroughly holds school leaders to account. The IEB is currently working hard to secure the future of the school with the most appropriate partner as a sponsored academy.

External support

The local authority provides regular support and challenge for Edlington Victoria Primary School. The representative of the local authority has worked closely with the executive headteacher and head of school, supporting them to develop staff and drive school improvement. The local authority has undertaken an analysis of school assessment information and, alongside the leadership team, reviewed teaching and learning in all classes. Local authority representatives attend IEB meetings and provide accurate evaluations of the performance of the school, assisting the IEB to effectively question school leaders.

The executive headteacher makes excellent use of the skills of staff from Hilltop Primary School. All teachers at Edlington Victoria are paired with a teacher from Hilltop and staff from both schools attend training together. Teachers speak highly

of this support and value the knowledge and experience of their partner. As a result of this strong learning partnership between the two schools, the senior leadership of Edlington Victoria is having a positive impact, there are improvements in teaching and middle leaders now have a much better idea of how to develop teaching in their subject areas.