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1 February 2016

Ms Julie Green
Executive headteacher
Horninglow Primary School
Horninglow Road North
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Dear Ms Green

Special measures monitoring inspection of Horninglow Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19–20 January 2016, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 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:

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

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection unless they have spoken to me in the first instance.

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching so that, in all classes, pupils are offered the right level of challenge and support by making sure that:
 - teachers plan more work specifically for the most able pupils to extend their learning
 - teachers check more often that pupils are sustaining their learning throughout lessons, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
 - teaching in the Reception class is consistently good
 - teachers and support staff have more opportunities to see and share best practice.
- Improve pupils' attainment in reading and writing and sustain the rise in achievement in mathematics by giving pupils:
 - more opportunities to write at length across a broad range of subjects, and enough time for them to edit and improve their writing
 - more varied and interesting books to read, making sure that teachers and support staff check more frequently that pupils are improving their reading skills
 - opportunities to develop and improve their problem-solving skills in all mathematics lessons
 - more opportunities to explain their calculation methods when solving mathematical problems in all classes.
- Make sure that leaders, managers and the governing body have a greater impact on improving teaching to raise achievement in all year groups by:
 - securing strong leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop more good and outstanding teaching across the key stage
 - making sure teachers and leaders assess and check pupils' progress and performance more often so that all pupils achieve as well as they should
 - setting clear targets and measures of success in the school's development and action plans
 - monitoring the quality of teaching more accurately and thoroughly to provide teachers and support staff with the right pointers and guidance to improve their teaching
 - improving the quality and effectiveness of supervision at break times to ensure that all Key Stage 2 pupils behave well and safely.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

- An 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 fourth monitoring inspection on 19–20 January 2016

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, and a group of pupils. The inspector carried out 20 observations of parts of lessons and a scrutiny of children's work in early years with the executive headteacher.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit two teachers in Nursery and Year 1 have been replaced by temporary teaching staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Since the start of the autumn term 2015 pupils have made good progress in their reading. The proportion of pupils below the expected national standard for their age has fallen across Key Stage 1 and 2 and pupils are well on track to exceed the school's targets for the end of the school year.

The teaching of phonics in a structured and organised way has contributed significantly to the rise in standards in reading, especially in Reception and Year 1. Older pupils in Year 5 have a regular reading session before school to extend their reading skills across a wide range of genres. Their reading and comprehension progress is checked on a daily basis and they are making significant gains in these areas.

Progress in writing is not as marked as in reading and to date the school has not as easily been able to demonstrate the progress pupils have made. Work in books suggests it is good in early years but more varied in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils are being given more opportunity to write at length during literacy lessons but the extent to which this is planned for in other subjects is still developing. Pupils spoken to said they do not enjoy writing as much as they do reading and mathematics, which they find more interesting.

Progress in mathematics is slower than in reading. In a few year groups the proportion of pupils below the national standard for their age has risen. The school's strong focus on raising standards in reading has led to less focus on mathematics. Pupils have more opportunities for problem solving but they are not always given sufficient time to explain how they got their answers. Where information is recorded on mini-whiteboards this information is not retained for teachers to see.

The recent introduction of a pre-teaching session before mathematics lessons is already beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially in upper Key Stage 2. It has not yet been consistently as well established in other classes, however.

Attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils are closing throughout the school. There are larger gaps in attainment in mathematics compared to reading for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language. This reflects the situation for other pupils in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Swift action has been taken to address weaknesses in teaching identified at the last monitoring visit. There still remains some variation in the quality in the teaching in each key stage, however. All teachers observed managed behaviour well to ensure there were no distractions to pupils' learning.

The teaching of reading is a strength. Guided reading and phonics sessions are taught well to enable pupils to apply their reading skills in other aspects of their learning. Teachers are using technical vocabulary with pupils right from the start so that pupils from Reception upwards understand terms such as 'blending' in phonics.

Teaching of numeracy is not as consistent. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to give extended answers to how they solved problems but pupils are not always given enough time to complete their explanations.

The quality of the additional support is variable. Some additional adults confidently teach groups or even whole classes. Effective open-ended questions starting with 'How' or 'Why' allow pupils to give reasons for their answers. In some instances individuals or groups are spoon-fed answers. This leads to pupils' continued dependency on adults for additional support.

The extent to which teachers check how well pupils are doing before moving on to the next stage of their learning varies. At their best teachers take feedback to refine the next part of the lesson. Elsewhere where pupils record information on mini-whiteboards, teachers do not have a permanent record of who has grasped a concept and who is still struggling.

Marking is inconsistent. It is effective where next steps set are followed up in the next piece of work. Elsewhere this does not happen consistently enough.

Similarly, the extension or challenge for the most-able learners is not consistent from class to class. Where all pupils have the same learning objective, or all are required to start at the same point, the most-able pupils do not always have the time or opportunity to move on to more challenging work.

Evidence from children's work, outcomes for children and monitoring by leaders indicates that teaching in Reception is consistently good over time. Even snack time is an opportunity for children to practise their numeracy skills and learn key vocabulary such as 'more than' or 'less'.

There are developing opportunities for teachers and support staff to see good practice in other schools. The extent to which staff observe each other within school is still at an early stage.

Teachers are identifying different groups of learners and their outcomes are checked through pupil progress meetings. This has led to the narrowing of the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils but gaps, especially in mathematics, remain for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils behave well in and around school and in lessons. They have a good attitude to learning, even in those lessons where the pace of learning dips. They are resilient and do not easily get distracted. Pupils work well with each other. Relationships are good and they support each other well, correcting each other's work.

Pupils spoken to reported that they feel safe in school and on the playground. Bullying is rare. Almost all pupils spoken to said that if bullying occurred they would report it with confidence that it would be dealt with effectively.

Pupils reported that behaviour was good over time except in a couple of classes. These classes were in line with where leaders had identified previous weak behaviour management by teachers.

Through close tracking of incidents leaders quickly identify any behaviour issues. For example the external music provision was stopped as misbehaviour was linked to the quality of the provision. The red and yellow card system and 'Toy Story' behaviour strategy is popular with pupils and has led to a fall in reported incidents.

Attendance is improving and is up on the same point in the school year compared to 2015. The number of persistent absentees has been significantly reduced.

Pupils have opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through recent school trips to the Houses of Parliament in London and the Co-op museum in Rochdale. These trips extended their understanding of diversity in Britain.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive headteacher has continued to bring about improvements in the school. There has been a rapid turnover where teaching or external provision has been identified as weak. Inconsistencies in the effectiveness of the support of additional adults are now being addressed through performance management.

The senior leadership team is now cohesive and united, sharing a common vision for the school. Leaders are clear in their roles and have started to take on increased leadership responsibilities for assessment, behaviour, safeguarding and monitoring teaching. This is enhancing the school's capacity to improve further. Leadership in early years is now strong and has led to improvements in provision and outcomes for children.

Challenging targets have been set by leaders for pupils and their progress is closely monitored. There are checks on their outcomes every three weeks and regular pupil progress meetings with teachers.

Information on the website is much improved and up to date, although a few gaps remain.

Leaders have had significant impact on raising standards in reading through the phonics strategies introduced. They recognise there is further work to do in raising standards in writing and especially in mathematics.

Leadership for the most-able pupils is still underdeveloped as leaders have focused on raising the standards of low-achieving pupils.

Governors are holding leaders closely to account, including being responsible for suggesting the move to three-week monitoring of pupil progress. They are skilled and knowledgeable and welcome the increased quality of the pupil performance information they now receive. This helps them to ask more challenging questions.

Supervision at breaktime is now effective to ensure pupils play safely.

External support

The local authority has continued to support and challenge the school through regular reviews of the school and of the early years provision. It has also arranged effective support for behaviour and for middle leaders.