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Ms Julie Green
Executive Headteacher
Horninglow Primary School
Horninglow Road North
Burton-on-Trent
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Dear Ms Green

Special measures monitoring inspection of Horninglow Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 29–30 September 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 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.

This letter and the 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 third monitoring inspection on 29–30 September 2015

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, a group of pupils and a group of parents of Year 2 pupils. The inspector carried out 16 observations of parts of lessons with the executive headteacher.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit, two assistant headteachers have been appointed starting from September 2015 – one to oversee the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and the other for Key Stage 2. A new literacy coordinator also started in September. The seconded deputy headteacher has left. A number of teachers left at the end of the summer term. Teaching vacancies remain in Years 1 and 3 where classes are being taught by supply teachers.

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes for pupils remain low with too many pupils working below age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Indicative results from recent tests and teacher assessments show that the proportion of pupils in Year 6 in 2015 who reached the expected level for their age increased in reading and writing but were still below the national average. Similarly, the percentage of pupils achieving the highest possible levels in reading and writing improved but fell in mathematics. Overall, the proportion gaining a Level 5 or above in reading, writing and mathematics is below that found nationally.

In 2015, the proportion of pupils making expected progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 improved in reading and writing to narrow the gap with the national average, but fell in mathematics. There is a similar picture for the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress. The gap with the national average narrowed in reading and writing but widened in mathematics. The attainment and progress gaps between disadvantaged pupils in the school and all pupils nationally narrowed in 2015.

School information and work in pupils' books indicate that there is still widespread variation in the progress pupils are making, depending on the quality of teaching over time, from good to inadequate.

Disadvantaged pupils are progressing at a faster rate than other pupils in the school. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not made enough

progress because of the legacy of teachers not taking full responsibility for them in classes and the variable quality of interventions.

From evidence in their books, pupils have more chances to write at length although in some instances the quantity is at the expense of quality. Pupils are engaged more in reading and are developing their phonics skills to tackle unfamiliar words. The extent to which support staff check pupils' reading is still highly inconsistent.

Pupils have the chance for problem solving in mathematics using shape, symmetry and angles but cannot always give clear reasons for their answers. Pupils have difficulty in explaining concepts such as reflex and acute angles or explaining how they solved a calculation. Some activities in mathematics are hindered because many pupils lack the basic calculation skills expected for their age.

In lessons seen, pupils' learning was enhanced when work was challenging and set to reflect their different starting points. Learning continued, for example, when Reception children lined up for lunch and they were still revising their numbers from one to 20. Elsewhere, there were long delays between activities or when groups changed over. There were instances of extended periods where no learning was going on as pupils waited to start.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is not yet good enough to make sure that pupils are making as much progress as they should.

There are gaps in teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics, which leads to pupils developing misconceptions or not being sufficiently challenged. When pupils display a higher degree of knowledge than the task they are required to do, teachers are not always able to respond to this to ensure that the most-able pupils are stretched in their learning. Some pupils spoken to said they found their mathematics work easy and that this is not always picked up quickly enough when teachers check their learning or plan tasks.

The contribution of teaching assistants is highly variable. At their best they ask challenging questions to help pupils develop their thinking. There are other instances where there is little for them to do and they have to wait to be told what to do by the teacher. Their interventions at times give the answers to the pupils without the pupils having to think through for themselves. There are missed opportunities when the teacher is talking and the teaching assistants are unoccupied when they could be taking notes of what children are saying or observing who is not participating. Staff have not yet had enough opportunities to see what good practice looks like, but this is planned for the future.

Marking is inconsistent. There are instances where pupils are given appropriate extension tasks to extend their learning. Where pupils respond and teachers check their answers, this enables pupils to make more progress. However, there are too many times where the extension is a closed question requiring pupils to do no more than say yes or no. There also occasions where pupils either do not do the task and are not followed up, or pupils respond but the teacher does not acknowledge this. There are also instances where pupils have had work marked as correct when they have made errors.

Elsewhere there are significant strengths in some teaching in Reception and in Year 2. Teachers have high expectations and pupils show they are ready to learn. No time is wasted in getting down to learning and every minute right to the end of the lesson is used to ensure that learning continues.

Teachers now identify in their planning those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, and are introducing specific strategies to support them.

Phonics is well taught and this is helping pupils prepare for their reading. Parents can join their children for reading sessions in Year 2 and this helps them to support their children's reading at home.

Assessment is now more accurate. Through moderation with partner schools, teachers are more confident and accurate in identifying where pupils are at. A new tracking system has been introduced that will enable leaders to check the progress of pupils more regularly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Behaviour at lunchtime and breaktimes around the school and in most lessons is good. Older pupils take on responsibilities as play leaders for younger children or help with tasks such as sorting books during their free time. Adults engage well with pupils in the playground encouraging them to participate in games and play well and safely with each other. Supervision of pupils at breaktimes is much improved and there is a calm orderly atmosphere at these times. Pupils also act sensibly and are safe in and around school. Pupils work well with each other in lessons and support each other well in group tasks.

Pupils are not always ready to learn especially in classes at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Because pupils currently in Years 1 and 3 have not made the progress expected of them in the previous key stage, they are not well enough prepared for the next stage in their learning. Children in Nursery have not yet fully established routines for sitting on the carpet and not shouting out answers. In other year groups, some pupils drift off task in lessons if they become bored or the work is not pitched at the right level. Some

pupils resort to putting their hand up if they get stuck and do not have other strategies to move their learning on.

Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and the school is working well with parents to promote regular attendance and punctuality.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive headteacher has been relentless in bringing about changes and improvements. There has been a considerable turnover of teaching staff and leaders. Consequently, a number of staff are new and have not had enough time in post to demonstrate their impact.

As a result of interventions put in place in Year 6, pupils made rapid progress during the summer term from very low starting points. However, there was not enough time for them to fully catch up in their tests given the legacy of previous weak teaching in the school.

As a result of new leadership, the early years environment has been transformed over the summer holidays and now has a full range of areas of learning in both the inside and outside environments, including literacy and numeracy. Arrangements for teachers to assess and track children's progress half-termly are now in place.

The new governors bring a wealth of experience and expertise in education. They are highly committed and share the headteacher's vision for the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, particularly in teaching and learning, and are prepared to ask challenging questions.

To date, much of the work has fallen on the shoulders of the executive headteacher. Governors need to ensure that the previous over-reliance on her does not continue as the newly appointed leaders step into their roles.

The senior leadership team has not yet met as a team to set targets and determine roles and responsibilities alongside the coordinators of literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. Newly appointed leaders have identified where the strengths in teaching are, but most need to develop their knowledge of where weaknesses in teaching remain. New leaders have not yet had the chance to observe teaching and learning formally. Leaders are keen to look at good practice further afield and within the Burton Co-Operative Learning Trust.

Performance management of teaching assistants has not yet started but is a key priority for leaders. The school has a large team of additional adults but their level of expertise to carry out their roles is variable.

The school's website is in urgent need of updating.

External support

The Burton Co-Operative Learning Trust has provided effective support to the school over staffing and sharing of practice. Networks are in place to develop this further. The local authority has been supportive in providing assistance and advice for literacy, numeracy and early years which has been welcomed by the school. Plans are in place for a review in order for the school to receive additional challenge.