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The Executive Leadership Team
Arthur Dye Primary School
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Dear Executive Leadership Team

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Arthur Dye Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 and 3 December 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted 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 Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone

Her Majesty's Inspector



Evidence

The inspector observed all teachers in class and looked at the pupils' work. Documents were scrutinised and meetings held with the executive leadership team, the senior management team and the chair of the interim executive board (IEB). During the visit, parental questionnaires were sent out by the school and the views of 52 returns were analysed and taken into account.

Context

Since the last visit four new teachers have joined the school. Two members of staff remain on long-term absence. In January 2010, the executive leadership team will be replaced by a management partnership with a local school, Rowanfield Junior School, one of three schools which have supported Arthur Dye since February 2009. The partnership will be led by two co-headteachers from Rowanfield and will be supported by a new deputy headteacher who has been appointed to start next term.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and experiences that are below expected levels. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning and start Year 1 with standards that are broadly as expected for their age. Recent data indicate that current Year 1 pupils attained above the expected level in personal, emotional and social development and this indicates outstanding progress and high levels of enjoyment.

In the most recent unvalidated Year 2 teacher assessed tests, standards dipped in reading, writing and mathematics, as predicted. This was because the staffing changes which occurred during the past academic year were disruptive to pupils' progress. In addition to this, a more systematic approach to assessing pupils' work has resulted in greater accuracy in making assessments. Class observations and work scrutiny show that standards of attainment are rising in Years 1 and 2. The gap between pupils' attainment and age-related expectations is decreasing. In the most recent unvalidated data for Year 6 pupils, overall standards remain significantly below the national average. However, pupils' current books show that they are now making good progress in their learning.

Standards are improving because the comprehensive range of targeted intervention strategies is steadily redressing the legacy of past underachievement. For example, the intensive support programme (ISP) is helping to plug the gaps in the pupils' skills and knowledge. The school is fully aware that pupils' speaking skills are poor and they are rectifying this through a whole-school approach which stimulates writing through talking. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls is steadily decreasing. In the most recent tests, boys outperformed the girls in mathematics. Pupils report that they enjoy school much more than they did in the past and praise the executive leadership team for making the positive changes.



Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

Raise standards in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2, especially for boys – satisfactory.

Other pupil outcomes

Behaviour has improved and is now consistently good. Pupils explain how this helps them to learn better because lessons are no longer interrupted by individuals who are not behaving appropriately. They have a good moral stance and interact well with each other. Attendance rates are now in line with the national average and exclusions are rare. Pupils feel safe in school and respond well to the needs of their personal safety in and around school. They are appreciative of the nutritious school lunches and talk with enthusiasm about healthy initiatives such as 'fruity Fridays'. The daily 'Wake and Shake' sessions remain very popular and pupils have a good understanding of why they need to maintain a high level of physical activity in their everyday life. The school council plays an effective role in ensuring the voice of all pupils is heard and valued. For example, they have been responsible for further initiatives for the 'Wake and Shake' sessions and for improving playground equipment. Links with a local supermarket and opportunities to meet jockeys from the nearby racecourse ensure that the pupils have greater involvement in the wider community. Although basic skills remain low, pupils are better prepared for their future. For example, a group of more able Year 5 pupils benefited from an enrichment programme at a local grammar school. Other pupils have met the local Member of Parliament and were able to find out first hand what his job entails. The pupils are reflective thinkers, as evidenced by a group of Year 5 pupils who sensitively interviewed their teacher about her role in school life.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching is of a consistently good quality throughout the school. Adults are enthusiastic and responsive to the pupils' needs. The purpose of the lesson is clear and all pupils understand what they are learning. Activities are well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils and questions are carefully tailored to ensure everyone is fully involved. Teaching assistants provide very effective support for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or just lack confidence. Interactive whiteboards are used creatively to make lessons interesting. Cameras are used well to capture important learning moments, such as when pupils tell stories to the rest of their class. There were some outstanding aspects of teaching observed. These were typified by extremely creative approaches and a certain amount of risk taking. This was exemplified when the pupils interviewed some of the teachers for their own 'Newsround' programme and talked with confidence about their findings.

Pupils fully understand the school's marking system and explain how they use the 'purple pointers' to help them move forward in their learning. The systems for assessing and tracking progress are firmly embedded into the life of the school and



pupils know what they 'must, could and should' do. However, pupils do not link these targets to what they need to achieve age-related expectations in their national tests.

The stimulating and exciting curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets the needs of the youngsters very well. Topics are chosen carefully to quickly engage the children and they quickly become aware of what today's 'learning secret' will be. In Reception, adults work successfully in close partnership and excellent use is made of the available learning space both indoors and outside. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is satisfactorily adapted to meet pupils' needs and links between subjects have been established. For example, a topic on Ancient Greeks included exploring related sports activities and food eaten during this period of history. Interesting topics which motivate the boys have been introduced with great success. For example, Year 6 pupils are enthusiastically creating an interactive PowerPoint program which has been specifically designed for the Reception children.

Pupils are well cared for and given good quality pastoral support. Systems introduced to improve attendance, such as sending texts to parents and celebrating improving success rates, have had a very positive effect. The lunchtime club for those pupils who feel vulnerable at times has had a good impact on behaviour in and around school.

Progress on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that teachers match work accurately to the needs of all pupils in lessons, and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve – good
- Use assessment, marking and target-setting more effectively to track pupils' progress, and to provide pupils with better indications of the next steps in their learning – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The drive and ambition of the highly skilled executive leadership team have not faltered. They have successfully managed to maintain a firm steer on improving the quality of teaching and learning while securing consistent leadership for the future of the school. The executive leadership team has ensured that staff have been directly involved in the shaping of a relevant and exciting school development plan. This has resulted in shared ownership and a focused approach. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school underpin the work of senior managers. They have embraced a consistent approach and are working systematically together to improve pupil achievement. Links forged with the executive leadership team's substantive schools have been used exceptionally well to provide specialist support for Arthur Dye. Parents continue to be further involved in their children's education. They are gaining increasing confidence in the school as echoed in a comment made by one parent who explained that 'the school is doing well'.



The IEB is playing an important part in driving the school's improvement. It has been instrumental in securing the new management partnership and has systems in place to monitor its progress over the next two years. By appointing an Early Year's specialist to the role of deputy headteacher, the IEB has ensured that there is appropriate expertise amongst senior leaders. They have ensured that statutory policy documents are now securely in place and prudently monitor the school budget.

- Ensure that the senior leaders rigorously evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively implement measures to improve pupils' achievement – good.

External support

The school continues to benefit from good support provided by the local authority which has worked closely with the executive leadership team and the IEB to secure the management partnership for January 2010. The evaluative work with the school improvement partner has had a positive impact on implementing further measures to improve pupil achievement.

Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by encouraging all teachers to be creative and adventurous in their approach.
- Ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to meet their age-related expectations.