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25 September 2009

Mr A Reed
Executive Head teacher
Boston Staniland Primary and Nursery School
Peck Avenue
Boston
Lincolnshire
PE21 8DF

Dear Mr Reed

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Boston Staniland Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit with Lynne Blakelock, Additional Inspector, to your school on 23-24 September, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in March 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed subject to prior discussion with the monitoring inspector.

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 governors and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Boston Staniland Primary and Nursery School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 23-24 September 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive head teacher, senior staff, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

The governors entered into a soft federation with Haven High Technology College and Carlton Road Primary School from April 2009. The head teacher of Haven High Technology College is the executive head teacher and a head of school has been appointed along with a new senior leadership team. In September 2009 three additional teachers joined the school and there are now no mixed age classes. The school roll has increased by 57 pupils this term with a large proportion of the new entrants speaking English as an additional language.

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

The new senior leadership team have put in place a number of strategies to improve pupils' attainment and achievement. Classes are composed of a single age group to simplify planning. Teachers use a common format for planning lessons which focuses on what should be learnt and the outcomes expected for different pupils according to their current level of attainment. Assessment and marking procedures have been reviewed and made more rigorous. However, these changes are relatively recent and teachers are still becoming familiar with them and developing them as standard practice. They were not in place in time to affect the results achieved by pupils at the end of the summer term.

Provisional results from the tests taken by Year 6 pupils in summer 2009 indicate that attainment declined slightly on the previous year in mathematics and science. Results in English were slightly improved. However, fewer pupils reached the higher Level 5 than in 2008. Although these results were often close to the school's predictions, based on pupils' performance in Year 2, they are still below the Government's target for all schools and are low. The 2009 provisional results for pupils in Year 2 fell significantly in reading and writing in comparison to 2008. They were also slightly lower in mathematics. Again, attainment is low.

The school analysed the progress made by pupils in Year 6 in 2009 based on the provisional results. This indicated that around one third made the expected two levels of progress from the end of Year 2. The analysis of Year 2 pupils' performance



compared to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage also showed a relatively low proportion making expected progress or greater. The progress made by pupils was, therefore, inadequate. No particular group of pupils performed consistently better than others. Girls in Year 6 made slightly less progress than boys in English and similar progress in mathematics. However more girls achieved Level 4 in both subjects than boys. Pupils with special educational needs did not make as much progress as their peers.

In the lessons observed during this inspection, pupils generally showed interest in their work and most tried hard. They regularly worked in pairs and small groups, and benefited by sharing ideas with their talking partners. However, even where teaching was good, pupils often struggled to apply their skills and understanding because of gaps in their learning from earlier years. This affected their ability to work independently and to make good progress. Pupils' progress overall was satisfactory but this is not sufficient to close the gaps in learning and raise attainment to the required level. Some pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly younger ones, struggled to engage with lessons because they did not yet have sufficient familiarity with common words to follow instructions or take in new knowledge.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by planning work that is more accurately matched to pupils' different learning needs – inadequate.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

There is a common system across the federation to promote and sustain good behaviour. This has had a positive impact at the school, although it is not yet fully embedded. Pupils understand and respond to the clear expectations and rewards for good behaviour, as evidenced by the sharp fall in exclusions. Very regular monitoring is enabling staff to establish common features in behaviour and address any potential issues promptly. In the lessons seen, pupils generally paid attention and followed teachers' instructions. Some needed to be reminded of expectations but this was usually sufficient to bring them back to work. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, expectations of children's behaviour were not always high enough and sometimes led to behaviour that was not addressed effectively and which slowed down progress. Pupils' attendance declined in 2008-9 and is well below average. The school is tackling the problem. A number of appropriate strategies and rewards for good attendance are in place but their impact has yet to be seen. Likewise, punctuality to school is being addressed, starting with the youngest children. Evidence so far shows a fall in lateness to school. Pupils feel safe in school and trust the staff to deal with their problems.



The effectiveness of provision

The senior team set clear expectations for the quality of teaching which are understood by teachers. Revised systems for the planning of lessons, the assessment of pupils' learning and marking of work are in place. The school's accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning, based on a cycle of unannounced observations, has resulted in a clear focus for improving teaching. However, although there is a strong drive towards improvement, the revised strategies are not yet applied consistently in lessons.

Every class was observed during the visit and, teaching was good in a third of the lessons and satisfactory in just over half. Three lessons were inadequate. The quality of teaching does not yet consistently enable pupils to make enough progress in their learning. Overall, teachers have a good grasp of their subjects and try hard to make learning interesting. Classroom management is good. Teachers use interactive white boards well to aid learning and to provide a variety of activities in lessons. Teaching assistants give sound support to pupils with a wide range of needs.

In the stronger teaching, pupils understand the purpose of learning and teachers regularly revisit the key objectives as the lesson develops. Specific and focused questioning extends pupils' thinking. It enables teachers to recognise quickly where pupils have gaps in their basic skills and ensure that they provide activities for pupils to consolidate their learning. Summaries of lessons are a regular feature and the best involve pupils in assessment and evaluation of their progress.

However, in the satisfactory lessons, teachers' planning does not take into account carefully enough the wide variation of ability across the class, particularly the increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. This results in an inappropriate level of challenge to some pupils, for whom work is either too easy or sometimes too demanding. Where teachers are less attuned to pupils' understanding and progress in the lesson, planning is not yet flexible enough to make sure that pupils' basic skills improve. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long so that pupils become restless and do not have enough time to apply their learning.

The marking of pupils' work is regular and the majority seen during the inspection informed pupils' of their achievement and how to make further progress. It was pleasing to see some pupils' responding to this advice in subsequent tasks, although this is a developing feature.

The curriculum offers a sound range of experiences, enhancement and enrichment activities. The provision of a new, well resourced computer suite and laptops has broadened opportunities for pupils to develop skills and competences and also to learn independently. Planning for the curriculum has been simplified by the move to single year classes. However, provision for pupils who speak English as an additional



language is not routinely given sufficient thought to ensure their learning needs are met. There was some variation in the quality of organisation of learning. It included, for example, the use of space to maximise children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the impact on learning of children sharing resources.

Overall, accommodation is good. However, provision and accommodation in the Early Years Foundation Stage is limited because many resources are old and in some cases dilapidated, such as the painting easels. The outdoor area does not offer a full range of resources to enable the children to access all the required learning activities. The lack of a cover restricts the occasions that they can learn outdoors.

In 2009, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities performed less well than expected. New systems are resulting in more accurate identification of pupils' needs and consequently, improved care, guidance and support. They are leading to focused support for such pupils, including constructive links with local authority services. Teaching staff have clearly-defined roles and responsibilities, such as compiling individual education plans for pupils in their class. This is emerging practice.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that when pupils receive written advice about how to improve their work it is followed up by teachers – satisfactory
- Ensure that the quality of curriculum planning, teaching and learning is such that it allows pupils to progress in their basic skills to a higher level – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive head teacher, with senior staff, has rapidly put in place systems and practices intended to raise attainment. The senior team established priorities immediately and devised detailed plans related to the key areas for improvement from the last inspection. They also promoted general action to improve teaching and teachers' assessment of pupils' work and progress. Most of the systems and practices are in the early stage of development and it is too soon for them to show distinct impact on pupils' performance. However, the school's monitoring of its work indicates that some aspects have improved such as the focus on learning in lesson planning and the use of displays to support pupils' understanding.

There is a thorough schedule for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work and, particularly, progress on the key areas for improvement set by the last inspection. The executive head teacher, with support from staff in the federation, has made expectations clear to newly appointed leaders. Those staff who conduct lessons observations have received training and undertaken paired observations with local authority advisers to refine their approach and validate their judgements. This is good preparation for their task of monitoring teaching. The school's current



evaluation of the quality of teaching is accurate and has identified appropriate areas for improvement. The recently established system for recording assessments and tracking pupils' progress provides an improved starting point for identifying those who require support.

Subject leaders, who have only been in their posts since April, have made an enthusiastic start in promoting new approaches to planning, teaching and assessment. They have prioritised initiatives and provided training to staff. They are beginning to monitor provision and outcomes in their areas and to report to senior staff. The cycle of monitoring and evaluation activities provides a rigorous structure for them to track improvement.

The executive head teacher, with senior staff, has acted rapidly to resolve key difficulties in staffing, resources and facilities. Access to the experience and expertise of staff from the federation has provided useful guidance and support to teachers taking on new responsibilities. Essential provision for the safeguarding of children is in place.

The governing body has undertaken an audit of its capability and training needs. Training has already been provided to assist them in asking questions of the school's performance and improvement. There is a new committee structure and a nominated group which specifically monitors progress against the school's action plan and key milestones for improvement. Governors are linked to an area of the school, increasingly make visits and are expected to report back to the full governing body. The governing body is now better placed to hold the school to account.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that school leaders prioritise initiatives, and rigorously monitor and systematically evaluate the work of the school to identify what else needs to be improved – satisfactory

External support

The local authority has provided support to the school over some time. This has had more impact recently. Since the last inspection it has provided an additional experienced teacher, involved the school in programmes designed to improve the tracking of pupils' progress and their writing, supported senior staff in making judgements on teaching and given advice on provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These initiatives have helped to stabilise the school and supported leaders in establishing priorities. Support and training for governors has focused on establishing priorities and developing the skills to hold the school to account. An experienced additional governor has joined the governing body. The local authority's statement of action provides a solid basis for supporting the school to improve further and its impact has been satisfactory. However, it is only recently



that the school has had sufficient stability in senior leadership to ensure that any initiatives can be implemented and sustained.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve provision, teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.