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Mrs Lynsey Hunter
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hunter

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Tupton Primary School

Following my visit with Maxine Clewlow Additional Inspector, to your school on 9-10 February 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 Strategic Director for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook

Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Tupton Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 9-10 February 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, spoke with pupils, a group of governors, and a representative from the local authority.

Context

A new headteacher took up post on 1 January 2010.

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

The 2009 Year 6 test results have now been confirmed and can be compared to national averages. As reported in the last monitoring letter pupils' attainment rose in mathematics and science compared to the previous year. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in mathematics and science was higher than the national average. However, the proportion attaining the higher level 5 was below the national average in both of these subjects highlighting the need to improve the progress of the most able. Results in English were broadly average but the proportion of pupils who achieved Level 5 was well below the national average.

The school's assessment data indicates that more pupils are now working at attainment levels expected for their ages compared to the time of the last visit. However, this data shows a mixed picture with respect to progress. More pupils in Year 6 are catching up to where they should be compared to pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. This indicates that progress and achievement are better in Year 6 than the rest of Key Stage 2. Assessment data also highlights that the biggest gap between pupils' current attainment and that expected for their age is in writing.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 – 6, by ensuring that assessment information is used in teaching to challenge all pupils at the right level - satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The pupils' behaviour is always satisfactory and sometimes good especially when teaching is lively and activities include practical work. The pupils themselves are aware that behaviour has improved and talk about how lessons have become more interesting with more opportunities to do art, music and geography. The pupils'

attitudes to work have improved since the last visit and there is a greater sense, in most lessons, that they are keen to complete their work. When behaviour is good, for example in a Bhangra dancing lesson, pupils are keen to rise to the challenge to improve their performance. In some lessons, pupils work well collaboratively in groups sharing resources and producing joint pieces of work.

Attendance continues to be similar to the national average.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has not improved significantly since the previous monitoring visit. Teaching was satisfactory in most lessons with some good practice developing. However, there is still a small proportion of inadequate teaching when expectations are inappropriate and pupils do not make enough progress. In the small number of lessons when teaching was good pupils responded positively and good use was made of strategies to promote speaking and listening. Instructions and explanations about activities were clear and pupils moved on quickly to practise their skills or develop their understanding. Good teaching focused on providing resources and activities that challenged the more able pupils in the class. There is still a high proportion of teaching that is satisfactory. Often when teaching was satisfactory pupils were expected to listen to the teacher for too long and instructions and explanations were not given clearly which left pupils confused. This lack of clarity meant that groups of pupils, including the more able pupils, were not challenged sufficiently because they did not understand what was expected of them. In some lessons when lesson introductions were too lengthy teachers were not able to prevent pupils from chatting or fidgeting.

In lessons where activities were well matched to pupils' abilities teaching assistants were effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The support given by teaching assistants is not always effective. There were times, for example, when teaching assistants allowed pupils to just copy words or, on another occasion, repeatedly told them what to do instead of using effective questions to help pupils work it out for themselves. The nurture group caters for a small number of pupils and this initiative is organised well. Activities are carefully planned and pupils make clear progress in a short time period. Good monitoring of this project provides evidence to show that some pupils do not need future support and are able to return full time to their classes.

Teachers' lesson plans have improved with more focus being given to planning for different ability groups. This is the case for all subjects which were a priority for further improvement identified at the time of the last monitoring visit. However, there remains some confusion in planning between planning for different abilities and the expectations, known as must, should, could and aim higher, which are given to pupils at the beginning of the lesson. This confusion results in some teachers not making it explicit as to what they expect pupils to learn by the end of the lesson.

Teachers are making better use of targets to help pupils understand what is expected of them. The pupils were generally clear about what they are trying to improve because targets are clearly written on the wall, on target cards or in books. However, the use of targets is inconsistent and there are classes where targets are not clear or do not exist at all. These inconsistencies occur because not enough is being done to share good practice.

Since the previous monitoring visit timetables have been changed and there is a greater range of subjects now being taught. Pupils enjoy the creative subjects and in an art lesson pupils enthusiastically demonstrated good drawing skills.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Provide pupils, particularly the more able, with more opportunities to work independently and give consistent high quality support for those who need additional help – inadequate
- Ensure that all teachers set challenging targets and give pupils clear guidance as to how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work - satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new headteacher appreciates the need to accelerate the progress the school is making. She has quickly settled in and has identified where more work is needed to improve the quality of teaching and children's learning. Although it was a priority identified at the last monitoring visit to produce a clear and succinct improvement plan; this work was delayed but has now been completed by the new headteacher.

Following the previous visit no lesson observations were undertaken up until the end of December and so no evidence was gathered as to whether the quality of teaching was improving. Since January the head teacher has observed teaching and has written detailed notes of her findings. She has identified development points that are helpful but could be more specific so that any action taken by the teacher to achieve them can be evaluated in the future.

The deputy-headteacher continues to be a good role model for leading improvement, for example, through analysing assessment data. The coordinator for information and communication technology (ICT) has managed well the improvements in ICT equipment. However, the impact of subject coordinators has varied significantly. A number of action plans had been written but these have now been scrapped. Subject coordinators have not conducted any lesson observations and most of the evaluations of their subjects are not robust. A determined effort to

improve subject leadership has resulted in a 'wider leadership team' being formed in January which includes coordinators of key subjects. The wider leadership team have met twice and agreed their roles and responsibilities but no other action has taken place and therefore the group has not had any impact. There remain weaknesses in subject leadership and the results of some evaluation work, for example the findings of a science review, reflect inadequacies in driving forward improvement.

The school's special educational needs coordinator is carefully tracking the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Plans are in place to monitor teachers' lesson plans and have regular times at staff meetings to discuss progress for pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs coordinator is still developing her role and confidence in monitoring.

The governors have continued to monitor the progress of the school but have not focused enough on whether the impact of any work has actually improved the quality of teaching and subject leadership. The governors have shared with the headteacher their expectations of what needs to be done and they continue to ask pertinent questions at governor meetings.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Make sure that leaders at all levels monitor the school's work rigorously and hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make in their classes – inadequate

External support

The local authority has been convinced that the school is making at least satisfactory progress in all areas. Minutes of progress meetings reflect this confidence but also suggest that quantifiable measures of progress were not taken into consideration. Local authority advisers have worked with teaching staff to improve the quality of teaching with varied success. Joint lesson observations by local authority advisers and the headteacher have taken place since January which found the quality of teaching to be more positive than that observed by inspectors. Provision for information communication and technology has improved because of the adviser support given to the subject coordinator and training for all staff.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure teachers' plans are streamlined to clearly identify what pupils need to learn by the end of the lesson especially more able pupils.
- Eradicate inadequate teaching.
- Ensure that the members of the newly formed 'wider leadership team' have undertaken monitoring activities, evaluated findings and initiated actions that improve teaching quality and pupils' learning.

