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11 March 2010

Mr Adrian Reed
Executive Headteacher
Boston Staniland Primary & Nursery School
Peck Avenue
Boston
Lincolnshire
PE21 8DF

Dear Mr Reed

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

Following my visit to your school on 9 and 10 March 2010 with Geof Timms, Additional Inspector, 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 second 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

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed subject to discussion with the HMI.

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 & Nursery School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 March 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, saw 15 lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

At the time of the visit, one teacher was on extended sick leave. A teacher left the school in December and another will leave at Easter. Two experienced teachers have joined the senior leadership team. The school is in a federation with two other local schools.

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

The school has developed a rigorous system for recording and monitoring assessments of pupils' performance which provides an increasingly accurate representation of progress. The school's information on learners' current attainment indicates improvement in mathematics and reading, with the majority of pupils now working closer to the levels expected for their age. The information for writing shows that while most younger pupils are on track to reach the levels expected for their age, the majority of older pupils are working below the levels expected of them. The school recognised this issue and has prioritised the teaching of writing in its plans.

The school's analysis of pupils' progress matches that for attainment, with most pupils making expected progress or better in mathematics and reading. However, progress in writing is weaker. Progress is satisfactory overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage and better for children's number, physical and creative skills than for communication and literacy. The school now monitors the performance of specific groups carefully. The evidence indicates that most pupils who speak English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress in mathematics than in writing.

Scrutiny of pupils' work confirms the school's evaluation that attainment in mathematics is closer to the levels expected than in writing. Among the older pupils, too many have important weaknesses in their handwriting, printing rather than writing cursively. This has an impact on the accuracy of their work and the quality of their presentation. Too few pupils are making the good progress in writing necessary for them to make up for weaknesses in their understanding and skills.



In the lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory and, occasionally, good progress. The large majority settled to work promptly and concentrated well. They enjoyed their learning, especially when it involved practical activities. Pupils worked together well in pairs and in small groups, and were eager to share their ideas. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, they made independent choices with confidence and cooperated sensibly without adult intervention.

Progress since the last visit 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

The large majority of pupils behave well. In the lessons observed, pupils showed positive attitudes to their work. The few who lapsed in concentration responded well to teachers' encouragement or reminder of expectations. The school revised its behaviour management policy in January after discussions with the school council. Pupils understand the new system and say that the series of warnings and sanctions make clear what is expected of them. They also value the merit and reward systems. There have been no exclusions this year. Levels of attendance are currently below those for last year and the national average. The school has analysed the causes of this decline and is working positively with some families to improve attendance.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Of the 15 lessons observed, all were at least satisfactory. Over a third of lessons were good or outstanding. This improvement is the result of effective guidance, training and support, following the close monitoring and evaluation of teaching carried out by senior staff, key stage and subject leaders. Provision has also been improved by arranging for one teacher to teach either literacy or numeracy to both classes in a year group in Key Stage 2. However, teaching is not yet consistently good enough to enable pupils to make rapid enough progress in their learning to reach the levels expected for their ages, especially in literacy.

Teachers increasingly use assessment information to plan lessons that are more appropriate for their pupils. For example, several teachers changed their lesson planning after an assessment of the previous day's work showed that many pupils had not grasped important concepts. Interventions with small groups of pupils or on a one-to-one basis are showing positive impact. The school has improved provision for pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language by extending access to assistants who speak a range of languages, and providing a base for group work.



The best teaching is active, has good pace and keeps pupils fully involved in their learning. The interactions between staff and pupils, through questioning and discussion, extend and consolidate learning. In addition, pupils regularly talk with a partner on a topic. New technology, such as the interactive whiteboard, is used well to engage and focus pupils on their tasks. Where the teaching remains satisfactory, the pace of lessons is slower. A lack of consistent and regular checks on progress in lessons allows pupils to lose concentration briefly. Activities do not always challenge pupils sufficiently. Displays provide opportunities for consolidating learning but these are not yet used consistently to reinforce pupils' targets and refresh subject knowledge. Teaching assistants often provide good support but they are not always fully involved in whole-class sessions.

The marking of pupils' work has improved. Pupils say they find it helpful in showing them what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Teachers' comments are usually positive and encouraging. However, at times teachers miss opportunities to correct basic issues such as handwriting, spelling and punctuation. The school has begun to find opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and to respond to teachers' marking but this is at an early stage.

Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified more accurately than at the last monitoring inspection and support is quickly put in place. Pupils are becoming more aware of their individual targets although they are currently less involved in planning them. Useful links with a range of outside agencies support pupils' learning.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. The school has updated resources and refined teachers' planning and assessment skills so that children's learning is more accurately tracked. Adults interact well with children, extending learners' understanding with appropriate questioning. They ensure children stay focused on particular activities for a sufficiently long time to support their learning. The outdoor resources have been improved and the space available to use them for learning is more effective. The curriculum is better planned to ensure coverage of all areas of learning and a satisfactory balance between child and adult-led activities.

Progress since the last visit 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 headteacher and head of school set a clear vision for the future based on raising achievement. They increasingly delegate accountability to the senior leadership team and focus on strategic developments. The school has continued to strengthen the senior leadership team, appointing lead teachers to develop Early Years Foundation Stage provision and to promote individual learning. Subject leaders regularly monitor the progress and performance of pupils in their subjects. They meet teachers to review their assessment of pupils and use this analysis effectively to identify areas for action. Well-focused action plans lead to relevant training for staff. The subject leaders for literacy and numeracy have reported on recent progress to governors.

Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, arising from regular and rigorous evaluation of provision and its impact. Leaders set high expectations and have responded strongly where teaching has not met requirements. They have ensured improvements in provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and for those pupils who speak English as an additional language. They have also secured funding for an extensive range of individual tuition which is beginning to address deficiencies in pupils' basic skills, especially in numeracy.

Governors have undertaken a range of training, including how to make effective visits to the school and how to review pupils' assessment data. A small group of governors review the school's progress against the key issues from its last inspection, and they increasingly pose challenging questions for senior leaders. Governors are developing the skills and confidence to hold the school to account.

Progress since the last visit 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 – good

External support

The local authority provides effective support for the school. Consultants have worked with subject leaders to improve the quality and accuracy of assessment and to refine the monitoring of provision. Additional advice and expertise has strengthened provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective work with governors has increasingly enabled them to review the school's progress for themselves. The sharing of resources and expertise across the federation of schools continues to extend the school's ability to cater for pupils' needs.

Priorities for further improvement

- Urgently improve the writing of older pupils by making the most of all opportunities to practise and consolidate written skills through topic work and other subjects, and by remedying deficiencies in their handwriting.



