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30 September 2010

Mr Christopher Hassall
Executive headteacher
Slater Primary School
Slater Street
Leicester
LE3 5AS

Dear Mr Hassall

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Slater Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 and 29 September 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. 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 the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - introducing robust assessment procedures that give teachers the necessary information to ensure that lessons are challenging and matched closely to pupils' prior attainment
 - ensuring that basic skills are reinforced effectively through work in all subjects
 - ensuring that the curriculum is modified effectively to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language
 - planning work that motivates and inspires pupils and promotes enjoyment in learning.
- Improve procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils by:
 - introducing effective induction procedures for the many pupils who join the school throughout any given year
 - taking a more rigorous approach to promoting regular attendance.
- Strengthen arrangements for securing pupils' welfare and safety issues by:
 - taking action, by April 2010, to rectify all health and safety issues identified by the local authority
 - introducing effective systems to identify, support and record the progress of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable in any way.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - embedding ambition throughout the school and introducing rigorous procedures for checking on standards and quality for planning for school improvement
 - giving all leaders the training, time and resources they need to drive up the quality of teaching and learning
 - ensuring that governors oversee the work of the school effectively and collect the necessary first-hand evidence to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

Special measures: monitoring of Slater Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 28 and 29 September 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the executive deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special needs coordinator, groups of pupils, governors, representatives from the local authority, teachers and teaching assistants.

Context

Since the previous visit the school has reduced the number of classes from five to four. Two teachers have left the school. An assistant headteacher with responsibility for the day to day management of the school, a special needs coordinator and an Early Years Foundation Stage teacher have been appointed. A new chair of governors is now in post. In October 2010, governors will vote to decide whether to move to the consultation stage to become part of a hard federation with Taylor Road Primary School.

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

School assessment information and unvalidated national test results show that the attainment of Year 6 pupils remains low. However, it would have been much lower if their progress had not accelerated very rapidly from January 2010. This enabled the large majority of pupils to make the expected two levels progress in Key Stage 2. This term, pupils in the Year 4, 5 and 6 class are making rapid and sustained progress which is driving up standards. This is because of the high quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children enter school with skills that are well below expectations. School assessment information shows that this year a greater proportion of children than in previous years reached the expected skill level for some areas of learning, such as their personal, social and emotional development. However, in communication, language and literacy very few reach the expected skill level by the time they enter Year 1. Since the beginning of term progress made by children is accelerating because of the recent improvements in teaching and learning.

Pupils in the Years 1, 2 and 3 classes make erratic progress. Consequently, school and local authority (LA) information shows that the attainment of Year 2 pupils was lower this year than in previous years. This is a result of the varying quality of teaching in their lessons which can be satisfactory, but is too often inadequate. This means that the good work and improvements being made in other years is

undermined because pupils in these classes are not being sufficiently well prepared for their future education in school.

The school has successfully used the reliable assessment procedures to accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from homes where English is not the first language. These pupils now benefit from the highly structured and effective additional activities that are led by well trained teaching assistants. During these activities the quality of pupil's learning is good. However, it is too early for the school to demonstrate the impact of this work over time.

The school has rightly prioritised the need to improve English and mathematics lessons. The school has correctly identified that currently, the curriculum does not give pupils sufficient opportunities to practise and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The behaviour of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 is good. They now make a much stronger contribution to their own learning which is fostering greater independence. They report that they appreciate having targets to work to and conscientiously take the good advice they receive on the steps they need to take to improve their work. Behaviour in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably. Children were observed playing and working together cooperatively and considerately. In Year 1, 2 and 3 behaviour is less good in lessons. This is because pupils are not as well engaged in their work. Too often they are distracted or bored because the work is either too easy or far too difficult for them.

The effectiveness of provision

Support from the partner school and LA has resulted in steady and sustained improvement to teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the Years 1, 2 and 3 classes, inspection evidence and school monitoring and evaluation information shows that the additional support received has not led to the necessary sustained improvements in teaching. The ability to use prior assessment to inform planning so that work is pitched at the correct level for all pupils is a skill that teachers demonstrate that they are unable to implement effectively.

The response of pupils and parents that are new to the school is very positive because of the effective induction procedures. For example, one parent reported that 'the information was very useful and the school very helpful'. This has resulted

in the school successfully attracting a few more pupils than in previous years. As well as successfully meeting the pastoral needs of these pupils, the school is now accurately assessing their academic needs so that teaching and the curriculum is better tailored to meet their requirements. Robust procedures are now in place to ensure parents take their responsibilities seriously and to encourage pupils to come to school regularly. Consequently, the school successfully increased the attendance by 2.5% last academic year. This term the attendance rate is higher.

With the help of the LA, all necessary steps have been taken to improve health and safety, in particular the urgent recommendations from the last fire risk report. The procedures to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well cared for are robust and compassionate. Staff are well trained in safeguarding, strong links are established with outside agencies and school procedures are methodical and efficient.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils – good
- Strengthen arrangements for securing pupils' welfare and safety issues – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive leadership team has now successfully established robust management procedures, such as the tracking system and monitoring and evaluation activities that have resulted in the improvements to school provision. Special educational needs coordination continues to strengthen resulting in the much improved provision. The assistant headteacher has made a good start. He is sensibly establishing himself as a very good role model, particularly through the high quality of his teaching. He is gaining the trust of parents and pupils through activities such as the popular rewards assemblies they attend. He and the executive leadership team correctly appreciate that his developing role in driving improvements to teaching and learning is crucial to future school development.

Governors demonstrate an increasing ability to challenge the school and to hold it to account for its work. They demonstrate a greater knowledge and involvement in the work of the school through activities such as the steps being taken to hard federate with Taylor Road Primary School.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve leadership, management and governance – satisfactory

External support

The school has benefitted from good effective support from the local authority. They have particularly appreciated the strategic allocation of resources to improve

provision, help received to improve the health and safety of the school and the advice and guidance from the human resources department.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that pupils make the progress they should throughout their time in school by eradicating the remaining weak teaching.
- Establish links between subjects so that pupils have the opportunity to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons.
- Ensure that the assistant headteacher has sufficient support and challenge from the executive leadership team and governors so that he is able to drive forward improvements to teaching and learning.