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11 February 2011

Mrs J Connor
Headteacher
Leigh Primary School
Walker Lane
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 5PL

Dear Mrs Connor

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Leigh Primary School

Following my visit with Shirley Herring, additional inspector, to your school on 9 and 10 February 2011, 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 May 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is 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

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Tameside.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Angela Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- Raise attainment in mathematics to bring it in line with national expectations, by ensuring that methods of teaching numeracy are applied consistently and effectively by all staff.

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - rigorous and effective monitoring of the quality of teaching
 - developing the effective use of ongoing informal assessment in lessons
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of marking and in the use of learning targets for individuals, so that pupils always have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work and of what the next steps in their learning should be.

- Improve the impact of leadership and management on raising attainment and ensure that the school meets all of its statutory responsibilities by:
 - developing and implementing a strategic long-term plan for the school's improvement, tailored to meet the needs of the school and its pupils
 - ensuring that provision to safeguard pupils meets all statutory requirements
 - ensuring that the governing body provides challenge as well as support and that it holds the school fully to account for pupils' attainment and progress and for the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding provision.

- Improve attendance, by developing and implementing a programme of concerted and effective actions to promote good attendance.

Special measures: monitoring of Leigh Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 February 2011

Evidence

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors scrutinised documents, examined pupils' workbooks in lessons and observed 10 lessons. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior and subject leaders, teaching and support staff, pupils, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection in November 2010, one teacher has left the school for a new appointment.

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

Although attainment remains low, evidence seen during the inspection, including lesson observations, pupils' workbooks and the school's own assessment information, indicates that the rate of pupils' progress is increasing across the school. As a result, attainment is starting to rise in both English and mathematics; this is particularly apparent in mathematics in Year 6 and in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2, with accelerated progress evident.

The school's data tracking system is now in place and is starting to support the school's analysis of pupils' performance. The use of 'assessing pupils' progress' information is continuing to secure the accuracy of pupils' achievement data. The school is currently on course to reach the realistic, yet challenging, targets set for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics.

The identification of individuals, including those with additional learning needs, who require intervention is continuing to improve, with evidence of rapid progress for a number of Year 6 pupils targeted for additional support in mathematics. School leaders recognise that further detailed analysis of assessment data is required to track more closely the performance of identified groups of pupils, including those with additional language needs.

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics to bring it in line with national expectations, by ensuring that methods of teaching numeracy are applied consistently and effectively by all staff – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The profile of attendance in the school is high. Staff and pupils are all aware of the need to secure consistent improvements in all year groups, with rewards and a competitive spirit actively promoted across the school.

The robust work of the learning mentor, in particular, in liaison with the education welfare officer, has also ensured that parents and carers fully understand the importance of attendance and punctuality. As a result, better attendance is evident in the large majority of classes, with no overall decline in any year group. This is an improving picture since the previous inspection.

Pupils behave well, work hard and feel safe and looked after in school. Very positive relationships contribute significantly to their enjoyment of school life and they particularly like to receive rewards and certificates for their achievements and attendance. School councillors have recently been elected and council members have already offered constructive ideas on improvements to playground equipment.

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

- Improve attendance, by developing and implementing a programme of concerted and effective actions to promote good attendance – satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

Since the previous monitoring inspection, school leaders have been successful in achieving further improvements and a better level of consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Regular monitoring by senior leaders with governor and local authority personnel, together with targeted whole-school and individual professional development, has enabled the school to strengthen provision both in subjects and in year groups.

Half of the lessons seen by inspectors were good, enabling pupils to catch up on previous levels of underachievement. No inadequate practice was observed. In good lessons, pupils clearly understood the learning objective which was kept in focus throughout the lesson with regular checks on pupils' understanding. Speaking and listening opportunities, through the use of 'talking partners' were also promoted, allowing pupils the chance to explore and share ideas with each other and the teacher. Teaching assistants made an active contribution by providing effective support, overall, for individuals and groups of pupils.

However, in the best lessons seen, teachers were also knowledgeable about pupils' prior attainment and work was pitched at the right level, with differentiated tasks and questioning to ensure sufficient challenge for every pupil. In these lessons, rapid gains were evident with pupils actively participating and clearly enjoying their learning. Although teachers have a growing understanding of how to use

assessment information in lessons, the school recognises that more work is required to ensure that lesson activities, including questioning, fully extend and challenge pupils' thinking.

Pupils' work is marked regularly with helpful comments on how pupils could improve further, especially in their literacy and numeracy work. Pupils understand the marking system and older pupils, in particular, are aware of their group targets in English and mathematics and how they can make further progress. Both the quality and consistency of written guidance across the school is continuing to improve.

The curriculum is appropriately focused on improving pupils' basic skills. However, school leaders are also actively promoting pupils' engagement in the arts curriculum, through the work of the 'artist in residence' and regular extra-curricular opportunities in music.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher continues to provide purposeful and effective leadership. Under her direction, and with the support of the deputy headteacher, leaders and staff have maintained their focus on the wider improvement agenda with a growing sense of confidence and shared optimism. Everyone now understands what is expected of them, with clear policies and procedures in place, ensuring all personnel are able to fully play their part. Emerging improvements in pupils' attendance, achievement and the quality of teaching are already evident.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the school has continued to develop and strengthen the roles of senior and subject leaders. Senior leaders are continuing to sharpen their skills in monitoring provision and pupils' achievement, together with evaluating the impact of their actions on the wider improvement agenda, including the engagement and participation of pupils, parents and carers in school life. The work of subject leaders, in those areas other than English and mathematics, is currently at an early stage, with a suitable initial focus on supporting teachers' subject knowledge and evaluating resource provision.

All key priority areas, outlined in the school's strategic plan, have been fully evaluated with further action plans evident. The school's rigorous monitoring and evaluation schedule, including lesson observations, the scrutiny of lesson planning and pupils' workbooks and 'pupil progress' meetings is ensuring that school leaders' judgements of both provision and pupils' achievements are accurate. As a result,

performance management and professional development arrangements are well targeted and sharply focused on improving pupils' performance.

Safeguarding procedures and arrangements are secure and meet statutory requirements. Those designated with safeguarding responsibilities are continuing to work effectively to ensure both pupils' safety and well-being. School and governance initiated audits and reports highlight the school's robust approach to safeguarding issues.

The work of the governing body is developing well. Governors' link role with each school priority area ensures that the governing body remains well informed and is able to challenge the school effectively. Members of the interim strategic group continue to closely monitor and support the school's work through active involvement in aspects of provision and safeguarding. Recent appointments have ensured that a full complement of governors is now in place.

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

- Improve the impact of leadership and management on raising attainment and ensure that the school meets all of its statutory responsibilities - good

External support

The local authority continues to provide effective support and challenge which is well targeted and responsive to the school's needs in the context of current improvements. Evaluation reports, provided by the School Improvement Partner, together with specific support for literacy, numeracy, assessment and attendance have helped to support the school's progress in key areas. Good relationships exist and the school values the work of local authority personnel.

Beneficial partnership arrangements with Greater Manchester Challenge and a local school are also in place, with a focus on Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage respectively.

Priorities for further improvement

- Accelerate pupils' progress in lessons further by using assessment information to:
 - plan activities which closely match pupils' ability levels
 - develop the use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking.