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16 September 2011

Mrs S Ramsay
Headteacher
Eaton Valley Primary School
Dagger Lane
West Bromwich
B71 4BU

Dear Mrs Ramsay

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Eaton Valley Primary School

Following my visit with Daniel Kilborn, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14-15 September 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2011. 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

Newly qualified teachers may not 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 Sandwell.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2011

- Raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress across the school by:
 - monitoring pupils' progress rigorously by establishing clear assessment and tracking systems
 - ensuring that assessment data and progress tracking are used more effectively to ensure that all groups of pupils make good gains in their learning
 - ensuring that all pupils are set clear, individual targets for improvement in reading and mathematics, similar to those in writing, so they know what they are aiming to achieve
 - developing pupils' use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the range of curriculum subjects.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - developing teachers' use of assessment, including the use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to identify the next steps in learning
 - developing teachers' awareness of the learning needs of different groups of pupils so that lesson planning takes full account of the range of abilities in each class
 - providing increased challenge for more-able pupils so that they achieve in line with their capabilities
 - helping pupils to develop independent learning skills.

- Strengthen the leadership, management and governance of the school by:
 - ensuring that all middle and subject leaders develop fully their skills in monitoring, data analysis and evaluation
 - ensuring that the governing body meets in full its statutory duties by monitoring, reviewing, updating and approving all required policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding
 - making readily available to parents and carers information on all relevant policies and procedures relating to child protection.

- Work with pupils, parents, carers and the education welfare officer to reduce unauthorised absence and improve attendance to the school's target of at least 94%.

Special measures: monitoring of Eaton Valley Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 14-15 September 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, representatives of the governing body, senior leaders, the education welfare officer and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last inspection, the acting deputy headteacher, the bursar and teacher with responsibility for literacy have left the school. The teacher with responsibility for numeracy has relinquished this post. A deputy headteacher commenced her duties in April 2011. An assistant headteacher with responsibility for literacy and a school bursar started at the beginning of September 2011. A teacher with responsibility for numeracy will start in January 2012. To accommodate the rise in pupil numbers, an additional teacher started at the beginning of this term. The Chair of the Governing Body has recently resigned.

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

The 2011 end of Key Stage 2 test results and the end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment remains low in reading, writing and mathematics and is no higher than in recent years. Evidence gathered during this inspection shows that pupils' attainment remains low throughout the school. Although pupils' progress is starting to accelerate and is now good in some classes, it remains inadequate in others.

The headteacher has implemented a number of strategies which, in most classes, are beginning to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers are now more accurately assessing pupils' levels of attainment and are using this information to plan work more precisely to meet pupils' needs. Half-termly meetings between the headteacher and individual teachers are used to monitor pupils' progress and to implement strategies to improve the learning of those pupils who are not on track to meet their end of year targets. Each pupil has targets for improvement. However, these targets are sometimes too vague and do not give pupils a clear understanding of how to improve. Some teachers are beginning to reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in lessons other than English and mathematics. However, it is inconsistent.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress across the school - satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The headteacher, governors and the school education welfare officer have been actively engaged in implementing strategies to raise attendance. Meetings with parents and carers, and rewards to pupils are starting to have a positive impact. The proportion of pupils who have 100% attendance during each of the past three terms has risen from 11.2% in the autumn term 2010, to 20.65% in the spring term 2011 and to 23.1% in the summer term 2011. However, the full range of strategies has not been in place long enough to show a sustained improvement in attendance rates for all groups of pupils or to have a significant impact on lowering the rate of unauthorised absence.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- Work with pupils, parents, carers and the education welfare officer to reduce unauthorised absence and improve attendance to the school's target of at least 94% - satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

New appointments have contributed to improvements to the quality of teaching. Staff training is helping all teachers have a clearer understanding of the learning needs of different groups of pupils and, consequently, teachers provide a better degree of challenge for most pupils. However, in many lessons, the work given to more-able pupils is still too easy. Despite the improvements, the majority of teaching is no better than satisfactory and some is inadequate. In many lessons, teachers are not clear enough about what they want pupils to learn, do not identify pupils' next steps in learning and do not check regularly enough on pupils' understanding. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils lose concentration and interest.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the last inspection, there have been some important developments to secure better leadership and management. New appointments have been made into key leadership posts and senior leaders' roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined. The headteacher has brought a vision for the future and is acting with determination to address the weaknesses found at the last inspection. With support from the local authority and deputy headteacher, she has implemented many systems and procedures to improve provision and raise pupils' achievement. Monitoring by senior leaders is now more regular and systematic. However, lesson observations do not focus sharply enough on how effectively teachers are clear

about what they want pupils to learn, the identification of pupils' next steps in learning and the checks made on their understanding. The governing body has received training on its responsibilities, especially regarding safeguarding, and is beginning to monitor, review, approve and update all required policies. Child protection and safeguarding policies are now widely available to parents and carers.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- Strengthen the leadership, management and governance of the school – satisfactory.

External support

All leaders and representatives of the governing body say they are pleased with the support they have received from the local authority. Actions taken by the local authority to provide support and guidance have been focused effectively on the main areas for improvement and are in keeping with the approved statement of action.

Priorities for further improvement

The school should ensure that all teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, identify pupils' next steps in learning and check regularly on pupils' understanding. Inadequate teaching must be eradicated as a matter of urgency.