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4 November 2011

Miss Melanie Lawson
Headteacher
Ladywood Primary School
Oliver Road
Ilkeston
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Dear Miss Lawson

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Ladywood Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 and 3 November 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 December 2010. The full list of 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

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 Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - developing teachers' skills in using assessment to plan lessons to guide pupils' learning more effectively
 - ensuring teachers acquire a wider range of techniques to promote pupils' active engagement in their learning
 - ensuring senior leaders monitor teaching and learning more frequently and rigorously.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the leadership roles of key senior leaders are focused more sharply on raising pupils' attainment and accelerating their progress
 - strengthening strategic planning to provide a clear steer for staff to develop provision
 - ensuring that all actions taken are monitored, evaluated and reviewed robustly by the senior leadership team
 - developing the monitoring and evaluation role of the governing body to enable its members to hold the school's leaders more effectively to account.

Special measures: monitoring of Ladywood Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 November 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work including nine lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, phase leaders and a group of pupils. Meetings were also held with representatives from the governing body and local authority.

Context

Since the last visit there have been no significant contextual changes. One member of staff remains on long term absence.

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

The rate of progress made by pupils across the school, particularly at Key Stage 2 and in mathematics, is accelerating and in some years, is good. As a result, standards are rising and the school is successfully narrowing the gap between the school and national expectations. The unvalidated results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 in the summer term this year indicate a significant increase in attainment in mathematics. More importantly, these results show that for the first time in three years, attainment in mathematics and in English is in line with the national average. Assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 also show good improvement in mathematics, with overall attainment in line with the national average.

Outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage remain good. Children make particularly good progress in the development of their social, emotional and creative skills and in their attitudes to learning. Children are excited by their learning because of the rich range of experiences they enjoy. The learning environments are vibrant and colourful areas where imaginations can be developed and experiences explored.

Teachers demonstrate that they are now much better at using assessment information to pitch work at the correct level for different groups of pupils. The more-able pupils report that they now find their work more interesting. However, they also report that it could be even more challenging for them. The inspector agrees with this view, as school assessment information and analysis of data shows that even though progress for the more able has accelerated, it is not as fast as it could be.

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, especially in mathematics - good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The school continues to nurture a strong ethos of care and respect for all and this is reflected in the extremely positive relationships that exist between pupils and adults. Pupils are enthusiastic learners whose behaviour is consistently good, both in and out of lessons.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve and is enabling pupils to catch up on existing gaps in their learning. This is reflected in the school's own monitoring and that of the most recent local authority review. During this visit there was good or better teaching in the majority of lessons seen. Lesson planning is consistent across the school and gives appropriate attention to planning tasks for pupils of different abilities. However, in some lessons, more-able pupils are not being given the right level of challenge to extend their learning further. Teachers are confident in using 'talk partners' and are making more effective use of probing questioning. Additionally, in many lessons observed, teachers demonstrated that they had carefully planned and prepared independent activities to ensure that pupils had the opportunity to work with their peers and take responsibility for their own learning. In the most effective lessons observed, teaching was intuitive and adaptable to pupils' needs. The pace of these lessons was good throughout and teachers demonstrated particular skill in leading purposeful, productive and focused class discussions.

Teachers are making effective use of assessment to inform planning and to check pupils' understanding. Regular and systematic pupil-progress review meetings provide good opportunities for staff to check assessment data and identify which pupils need more intervention and support. Teachers are increasingly becoming reflective practitioners, with evidence of increasing consistency in the quality of teaching. Regular lesson visits by senior staff and local authority consultants and advisers, provide useful feedback for teachers and pointers for improvement which are clearly focused on pupils' learning. Marking is of a high quality throughout the school and includes both self assessment and peer assessment. Pupils' work is marked regularly and accurately. Teachers provide pupils with helpful comments so that they can check and correct their work and understand what they need to do to improve and meet their targets.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher, assistant headteacher and senior leaders have worked hard since the last monitoring inspection in May 2011 to introduce a more consistent approach to planning, robustly monitor teaching and learning, check pupils' progress regularly

and devise a school improvement plan. These developments have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning and in raising attainment. The role of phase leaders has developed significantly, with good opportunities for them to lead the improvements for which they are responsible. As a result, leadership has strengthened and leaders at all levels demonstrate that they have the necessary skills to drive school improvement at the required pace.

Senior leaders have made a good start to setting out focused priorities for improvement in the school's improvement plan. The plan complements the local authority's action plan for improvement and sets out broader responsibilities and accountability to senior and middle leaders. The plan sets out specific priorities and actions with clear timelines and criteria so that senior staff and the governing body can measure how well the teaching is improving and the extent to which attainment is rising. This is improving the capacity to sustain improvements and ensuring that there is a consistent impact on improving the performance of teachers and support staff.

The headteacher is enthusiastic and determined and, together with other senior leaders, shares a vision that is both ambitious and realistic. Many actions have been completed successfully and their impact evaluated accurately. This reflects the determination of senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raising attainment.

The revised committee structure of the governing body, which was in its infancy at the time of the last monitoring visit, is now established and enabling governors to successfully develop their roles. For example, there are links between individual governors and subject leaders and focused committee meetings to check pupils' attainment, learning and progress. These developments have had most impact on raising attainment in mathematics and in increasing the proportion of good teaching.

Progress since the last Section 5 inspection:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management - good

External support

School leaders report how much they continue to benefit from the good and effective support of the local authority. The impact of lesson visits from consultants and advisors has increased the amount of good teaching and eradicated inadequate teaching. The link adviser provides regular progress reports with clear and helpful guidance for senior leaders and governors.

Priorities for further improvement

- ensure that, in all lessons, teachers provide more-able pupils with sufficiently challenging work and ambitious objectives that are closely matched to their capabilities

- ensure that all adults who support pupils work in class, consistently challenge pupils to enable them to increase their rates of progress
- continue to support those teachers whose teaching is satisfactory, to ensure that their teaching is consistently good.