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7 December 2012

Mrs Amanda Barnett
Acting Headteacher
Hilderthorpe Primary School
Shaftesbury Road
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East Yorkshire
YO15 3PP

Dear Mrs Barnett

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hilderthorpe Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 and 6 December 2012, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 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 – 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 East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012



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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, particularly that of boys in Years 5 and 6, by:
 - providing more opportunities to learn through undertaking practical and investigative activities
 - providing reading materials and learning resources that stimulate boys' interest
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of contexts
 - using information and communication technology extensively, both as a teaching aid and as a visual learning resource.

- Improve pupils' behaviour and conduct outside lessons by:
 - adopting a consistent approach to behaviour management to ensure that pupils move about the school in a safe and orderly manner and with respect for the safety and welfare of other pupils and adults
 - ensuring that pupils follow school rules
 - ensuring that pupils' ideas for improving behaviour are considered when drawing up strategies
 - ensuring that adults check and deal appropriately with every instance of inappropriate behaviour
 - helping pupils to learn self-discipline and take responsibility for their actions eradicating bullying, name-calling, racist incidents and homophobic comments.

- Ensure arrangements for safeguarding are robust and that pupils receive sufficient support to enable them to keep themselves safe.

- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - following up more rigorously persistent and occasional absenteeism
 - working more closely with parents and carers to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time
 - offering a range of short-term incentives to promote good attendance.

- Improve the quality of individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs by:
 - improving teachers' record-keeping
 - ensuring that individual education plans have specific targets accurately matched to pupils' learning needs
 - involving parents, carers and pupils in agreeing targets in order to help pupils make the next small steps in their learning and to keep parents and carers fully informed of their children's progress
 - checking and reviewing provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities more often so that targets are changed when needed.

Special measures: monitoring of Hilderthorpe Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 5 and 6 December 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work. He scrutinised documents, including those related to safeguarding and the progress pupils were making. In addition, he met with the leadership team, three members of the governing body, a group of pupils, a group of parents, the executive headteacher and representatives from the local authority. Eleven lessons were observed in Years 1 to 6, 10 of them jointly with leaders. An extended observation took place in the Early Years Foundation Stage involving all children and staff in this part of the school. This observation was also conducted jointly with a senior leader.

Context

The school continues to be led by local authority directed support through the acting headteacher and the executive headteacher. Procedures to appoint a substantive headteacher have begun, with members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority establishing interview dates in early March 2013. Since the monitoring inspection of May 2012, two new members of teaching staff and two governors have been appointed. The governing body is to meet before the end of the autumn term 2012 to elect a Chair.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The progress made by pupils in their learning is improving.

Pupils are making the best progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. In these classes teachers and their assistants use their knowledge of what pupils can do both during and after lessons to reshape activities. This is resulting in pupils learning increasingly well. For example, a teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage pinpointed her questions to individual children. This enabled all in her group to identify and say the sounds in words such as 'pot', 'dog' and 'got'. The children made rapid gains in their learning in a short time and were able to write these words on their individual boards.

In Years 5 and 6, pupils, including boys, benefit from a range of opportunities to practice skills in English and mathematics. Already their books in both subjects are bulging with interesting activities that have captured their imagination. Writing in these classes highlights more and more complex sentences and paragraphs with the correct punctuation and grammar. Pupils also identify and explain features such as personification, for example in poems about 'Jack Frost'. However, spelling mistakes such as 'invisable' instead of 'invisible' sometimes let down otherwise good work. Nevertheless, in these classes, teachers mark the work of pupils thoroughly. They also, almost without fail, present pupils with opportunities to correct work and follow up comments teachers have made.

As expected, and because assessments in the upper part of the school were accurate, the results gained by last year's Year 6 pupils in national tests in English and mathematics rose slightly. While this was welcome, standards remained low. Promising, though, were the results in the Year 1 phonics (the linking of letters and the sounds they make) tests. These were broadly in line with those found nationally. The school's focus on the systematic teaching of phonics and early reading is paying dividends.

While the overall picture is improving, the progress pupils make remains inconsistent in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4. This is because some teaching, albeit a minority, within these age groups still requires improvement. While some children benefit from marking that is highly focused and reshapes learning opportunities in lessons, in other classes errors are repeated from one lesson to the next. In a very few cases, incorrect work is marked as correct.

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, particularly that of boys in Years 5 and 6 – good

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching continues to improve.

Consistently good teaching is now evident throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. However, because in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4, a minority still requires improvement, the overall quality is not yet consistently strong to ensure all pupils make good progress so that previous underachievement is eradicated.

This welcome overall improvement in quality is the result of two factors. First, the assessments teachers make about what pupils know and can do are, at last, accurate. This means that all staff can, with confidence, plan work that builds on previous learning. Second, the leaders of each age group teach well themselves. Consequently, in their coaching and mentoring of colleagues, they can speak and act with authority. One such leader, for example, enabled her Year 3 and 4 pupils to make good progress in a gymnastics lesson. As a result of her high quality questions, her pupils put together a smooth sequence involving symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes. She used her pupils well to demonstrate their shapes so that all could learn from each other. Throughout the lesson, with much movement and enjoyment, pupils were calm and industrious. The coaching and mentoring these leaders provide are improving teaching quality elsewhere. The marking of one teacher, for example, provided much encouragement for his pupils. Importantly, it also gave clear guidance to pupils how they could improve. Furthermore, he provided opportunities for pupils to respond to his comments so that learning continued after the lesson.

Teachers are now seeking to challenge all groups of pupils. Teaching assistants are actively involved in lessons and in supporting pupils' learning. The learning of pupils with special

educational needs continues to improve as individual education plans are well matched to the need. In some classes, though, particularly where teaching requires improvement, the more-able pupils are less well challenged.

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

- Improve the quality of individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs – good

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Once again, good improvements have been secured in this area. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are increasingly secure and proved themselves to be effective during the wintery weather and icy conditions experienced during this monitoring inspection. Attendance continues to improve well. Standing at less than 90% at the time of the May 2011 inspection, overall attendance has risen to 95.4% currently. During this monitoring inspection some classes enjoyed 100% attendance. Once again, and as reported in May 2012, the strong stance taken by leaders and the governing body in expecting pupils to attend regularly is paying dividends.

The school continues to be a calm and orderly place to learn. Early Years Foundation Stage children, for example, behaved very sensibly outside as they raked up snow to make a snowman and gathered ice to feel how cold and wet the blocks were. This was because of good teaching and good levels of supervision. Both pupils and parents spoken with were most positive about improvements made with regard to behaviour and safety. In nearly all lessons low-level chatter, which used to get in the way of learning and particularly so when pupils were contributing to lessons, is a thing of the past. This is because teaching quality is improving. However, in a very few lessons it remains unchallenged.

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

- Improve pupils' behaviour and conduct outside lessons – good
- Ensure arrangements for safeguarding are robust and that pupils receive sufficient support to enable them to keep themselves safe – good
- Improve pupils' attendance – good

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The leadership of permanent leaders continues to improve as does their capacity to bring about consistency in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

Both the executive and acting headteacher continue to show great determination in bringing about improvement. In the main, the issues which placed the school into special measures have been addressed. Quite correctly, now these basic requirements are in place, leaders are placing higher expectations on themselves and staff about how pupils should learn and

behave. This approach is securing good improvements, although a little resistance remains. The governing body continues to strengthen its role in supporting and holding the school to account even though it has been through a difficult period recently. The questions it is asking are increasingly probing.

The focus of leaders, again quite rightly, is on improving the achievement of pupils. The curriculum continues to develop well with greater links made between different subjects so that learning in one area can be put into practice in another. Importantly, leaders, when judging the quality of teaching, focus on how well pupils are learning. The leaders who observed lessons with the inspector identified strengths and weaknesses entirely accurately. Their feedback to colleagues was clear even when messages were difficult to give. Equally importantly, the feedback given helps teachers improve even if the teaching and learning was good. One leader, for example, giving feedback on a most positive observation in the Early Years Foundation Stage focused on turning good learning into outstanding.

Establishing that assessments of what pupils can do are accurate has been a key factor in ensuring the school continues to improve. The strong work of the deputy headteacher, following good support and challenge from the local authority, has brought this about. Teachers now have a secure baseline on which to plan work that builds on previous learning. In most classes, teachers are using this information with increasing confidence to reshape lessons as they progress so that pupils learn at even faster rates. Not all teachers, though, have this confidence.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good levels of support and challenge to the school. Its work with leaders to ensure the accuracy of assessment and greater consistency in teaching quality is proving to be successful. The governing body is being supported through the appointment of additional members and in the arrangements for securing a substantive headteacher. The executive headteacher also continues to support and challenge the school and the acting headteacher well through coaching and mentoring leaders. His confidence in the growing capacity of permanent leaders to bring about improvements is well placed.

Priorities for further improvement:

There are no additional priorities for improvement. The fifth monitoring inspection, due in Spring 2012, will again check on whether the good progress made against the areas for improvement has been sustained. The main focus of the inspection will be:

- how well all teachers are making the best use of the accurate assessment information so pupils make rapid progress both within lessons and over time
- how well the wider leadership across the school, subject leaders and the governing body, for example, is developing so that capacity to bring about necessary improvements is at least secure.