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Ms Mary Foreman
Headteacher
Dogsthorpe Junior School
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Dogsthorpe
Peterborough
PE1 4LH

Dear Ms Foreman

Special measures monitoring inspection of Dogsthorpe Junior School

Following my visit with June Cannie, Additional Inspector, to your school on 15–16 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2013. 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.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Peterborough.

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that none is inadequate and a high proportion is good or better, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan work that is at the right level for all pupils
 - tell pupils how long they have to work on tasks and what they have to do to succeed
 - explain ideas clearly, check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions early
 - regularly check pupils' progress in lessons, making sure they are getting on quickly
 - mark work in a way that tells pupils what they need to do to improve it and how to get to the next level.

- Improve liaison between the infant and junior schools so that work planned for Year 3 pupils builds appropriately on their learning in Year 2.

- Improve the leadership of teaching by:
 - ensuring that judgements on the quality of teaching are checked against how well pupils are learning
 - giving teachers more guidance on how to improve and follow up these points rigorously
 - making sure that all staff have access to appropriate training, including the opportunity to observe good and outstanding practice in other schools
 - providing teachers with specific training to improve their skills in the teaching of mathematics.

- Improve the capacity of leaders and the governing body to drive and sustain improvement by:
 - reviewing the structure for senior and middle leaders to make sure that the headteacher has effective and direct support
 - using knowledge and expertise from outside the school to improve leadership at all levels
 - using assessments and records about pupils' progress to identify improvements needed and check that they are working
 - undertaking an external review of governance to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved
 - providing training for the governing body to make sure that governors can check the schools' performance and hold leaders to account for how well the school is doing.

Special measures: monitoring of Dogsthorpe Junior School

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 15–16 January 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair and a local authority member of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), and the senior school improvement adviser. Pupils' work and teachers' plans were evaluated. Discussions were held with two groups of pupils and informally with parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors observed teaching in 12 lessons; most of these were jointly observed with one of the new acting deputy headteachers.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, two teachers have left the school, and a new teacher has been appointed. Two new part-time deputy headteachers have been appointed. An interim executive board (IEB) has replaced the governing body. Membership includes previous governors, new members with significant experience of education and local authority officers. Processes are in place for conversion of the school to sponsored academy status.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The provisional results for Year 6 from the 2013 national assessments show that, despite some improvement in progress in mathematics, attainment and progress remain significantly below national expectations in both reading and mathematics. Progress in writing was closer to national expectations, but attainment remains low.

Teaching has not improved enough to ensure that the progress made by pupils accelerates at the necessary pace. Too many pupils hampered by past underachievement are not making sufficient progress to catch up. There is too much inconsistency in the progress made by pupils in the same year groups in different classes and by different ability groups.

New systems established since the last inspection are enabling senior leaders to track more accurately the progress made by pupils. Evidence from this tracking for the autumn term 2013 suggests a mixed picture of progress across the school. Overall, figures demonstrate some improvement in reading and mathematics but too many children have not yet made the progress they need to. School leaders are not clearly demonstrating how well the school is using the extra funding it receives to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals to make good progress.

Pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation skills remain weak because leaders have not ensured that teachers have consistently high expectations for these.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching varies too much across the school. Work in pupils' books, records of the local authority review of teaching and inspectors' observations show that more teaching is good but, in too many lessons, groups of pupils still make little or no progress. This is because the way lessons are planned means that some pupils work for significant periods of time without being taught by their teacher or being able to discuss their work with an adult. Where this is the case, pupils waste valuable learning time working on activities which do not challenge them or move their learning forwards. In some cases, this results in pupils distracting each other because they become bored or demotivated. In other lessons, pupils spend too much time engaged in activities which do not allow them to push on with work they are ready to undertake. At times, the poor organisation of lessons means it is difficult for teachers to track the progress individual pupils are making and ensure that learning takes place.

In lessons where teaching has improved, better direction is given to pupils about the time they have to complete their tasks. This is starting to promote more purposeful learning. Some teachers engage pupils effectively in discussions about what they will be learning and, in a few classes, pupils discussed their next learning steps and what might stop them from achieving these well. Improvements are limited to classes where teachers have taken responsibility themselves for making sure that pupils make better progress.

The marking of pupils' work has generally improved. More pupils are being given clearer guidance on what they have done well and what they need to do to further improve their work. In most classes, pupils' feedback against the marking shows that they have revisited their work and made changes. Not all teachers are using marking effectively, however. In some instances, marking is difficult for pupils to read. In others, teachers' comments do not fully relate to the work that pupils have done.

Changes to the way pupils' learning in mathematics is assessed and to how their work is planned are improving the quality of teaching in some classes. In the classes where these changes have taken place, pupils and their teachers are using the new system to review and record progress in learning together. Pupils spoken to in these classes understand the system well and appreciate the opportunities they have to discuss their learning with their teacher. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher used detailed subject knowledge to revisit pupils' previous learning and develop a better understanding of both angles and algebra. Probing questioning reshaped learning to match each pupil's different abilities and ensured that they were all excited by, and engaged in, their learning. Instances of teaching at this level are

rare. Because the quality of teaching is so variable, pupils do not have equal opportunities to enjoy and make progress in their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Procedures to support the most vulnerable pupils are recognised by the local authority as a strength of the school. Detailed logs of racist and bullying incidents show a decline in the number of issues the school has to deal with; pupils say that when they occur, incidents are dealt with quickly.

Pupils say they trust their teachers. They are quiet and well-mannered when they move around school. In lessons, nearly all pupils work hard, even when they are not interested in or challenged by their learning. They work together well and listen to each other's opinions. When behaviour in lessons is less good than it should be, it is because teaching is not good enough.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher has not given sufficiently clear leadership to middle leaders and teachers to enable the required improvements in teaching to be made rapidly enough. Interim executive board members expressed concerns about the headteacher's leadership. However, at the time of this inspection, no action had been taken to address these.

The school's action plan has been revised and expectations are clearer but some team leaders do not have the necessary skills or capacity to check on and improve the quality of teaching where it is not good enough. In addition, the lack of clear leadership has resulted in some confusion amongst staff about how they are expected to structure and organise lessons.

Meetings between leaders and teachers are improving the way knowledge about pupils' learning is shared between the infant and junior school. Teachers from the infant school have visited Year 3 classes to share information about pupils' progress. As a result, pupils' transition between schools is becoming smoother.

Visits for staff have been arranged to other schools so that teachers can observe good and outstanding practice. The impact of these visits has been patchy. Some school leaders and staff have not learnt from these useful visits while others have gained and improved their teaching. For example, leaders have implemented a new system of assessing pupils' work through which pupils' learning, knowledge and skills are assessed and recorded regularly. Changes made to planning have been more effective in mathematics than in other subjects because energetic and knowledgeable subject leaders have galvanised staff to collaboratively improve their subject knowledge and agree planning and teaching approaches, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

The appointment of two new part-time deputy headteachers, one with responsibility for standards and assessment and one to improve teaching and learning, has increased the school's leadership capacity. Despite the fact that they have been in post for a very short period of time, they have already identified key actions to support improvements in teaching and to ensure the effective use of resources so that pupils receiving support make better progress. It is too early to see any impact of these changes on the improvements required.

The interim executive board meets every two weeks to monitor the school's progress. The headteacher recognises that this is bringing greater challenge. However, poor relationships are a barrier to progress. The transition to sponsored academy status is in process. As yet, despite a meeting with the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, some staff do not feel fully included or informed about this process.

External support

The local authority has provided responsive advice that has supported analysis of pupils' work, validated judgements of teaching and learning, and ensured statutory support for newly qualified teachers. This support is beginning to have greater impact because the senior school improvement adviser has established a good professional relationship with the headteacher and the school's engagement has improved. A monitoring and support partnership group meets regularly to review the school's improvement. As yet, identified weaknesses in leadership have not been addressed.