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5 March 2015

Miss Sophia Shaikh
The Acting Headteacher
Weald Junior School
Robin Hood Drive
Harrow
HA3 7DH

Dear Miss Shaikh

Special measures monitoring inspection of Weald Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 3 and 4 March 2015, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014. 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 making reasonable 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Harrow.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically good by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide work that is not too hard or too easy for pupils
 - give pupils clear guidance to help them improve and to correct errors or misconceptions
 - always expect enough of pupils and do not accept work that is not good enough.
- Improve the achievement of pupils, especially in reading and writing, by:
 - making sure that spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught well so that pupils gain the required knowledge, understanding and skills quickly and securely
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise and reinforce these writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by making sure that they consistently take care with their work, do their best and maintain their concentration when working.
- Strengthen leadership and management and build the school's capacity to improve by:
 - ensuring that checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is rigorous and accurate
 - ensuring that written development planning identifies the main priorities, shows how these are to be tackled and how success will be measured
 - improving the skills of middle leaders to enable them to play a full part in securing improvement
 - ensuring that the pupil premium is used properly to support eligible pupils and help them to achieve well.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 March 2015

Evidence

During this inspection, the inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, attended an assembly and met with the acting headteacher, the executive headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. Meetings were also held with two assistant headteachers, a year group leader, teachers, learning support assistants and a group of pupils. Short visits to all classrooms were made jointly with the acting headteacher or the assistant headteacher with responsibility for mathematics. A sample of pupils' writing was reviewed jointly with the leader responsible for English. A selection of mathematics books was scrutinised with the assistant headteacher responsible for mathematics.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the interim headteacher has left the school. The deputy headteacher has been appointed as the acting headteacher. Weald Junior School will amalgamate with Weald Infant and Nursery School on 1 April 2015. The headteacher of Glebe Primary School, a local leader of education, has been appointed on a part-time basis until April 2016, to provide additional leadership capacity during a time of significant change. Her role is that of executive headteacher until the date of amalgamation. A teacher left the school in December 2014. Internal arrangements have been made to cover the vacancy. Arrangements for overseeing the spending of the pupil premium have been reviewed; an assistant headteacher now has responsibility for this area of the school's work.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school's information about pupils' progress suggests that Year 6 pupils' attainment and progress in 2015 will be significantly better than in recent years. Having analysed pupils' performance data, leaders and teachers are focusing their efforts on increasing the proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels, particularly in reading and writing.

Gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in school have narrowed since pupils joined the school. However, significant gaps remain between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally.

The quality of teaching

The quality of the teaching of mathematics has improved. There are now more opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt previously. Practical resources are more widely available and used more frequently to help pupils gain a firm grasp of concepts before moving on to more abstract approaches. Pupils now study mathematical topics for a longer period of time, enabling them to gain a more thorough understanding. Teachers' approach to their planning of mathematics has

been reviewed. Teachers now ensure that they take account of what pupils achieve on a daily basis when planning subsequent lessons. However, teachers do not always notice quickly enough during lessons when pupils are ready to move on to more challenging tasks, or to work which will broaden their understanding. This results in pupils repeating calculations of a similar nature when they have already demonstrated their proficiency.

At its best, teachers' written feedback to pupils enables them to bring about rapid and significant improvements in their work. Where it is less effective, feedback does not challenge pupils sufficiently, resulting in them achieving less than they are capable of. Occasionally, mathematical calculations are inaccurately marked, indicating a lack of precision in teachers' approach.

Learning assistants are deployed well. In the main, they provide good support for pupils through effective questioning and modelling of writing. They interact well with pupils, providing them with valuable opportunities to practise their spoken language and to develop their understanding of the features of texts. As a result, pupils' sentence construction, vocabulary and grammar improve noticeably.

The acting headteacher is working alongside local authority colleagues to develop the school's approach to assessing pupils in the light of the removal of National Curriculum levels. Pupils' reading, writing and mathematics targets are now shared with parents and carers through pupils' home-school link books.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The recently introduced programme of morning assemblies provides daily opportunities for reflection. Weekly themes include 'old and young', 'using our strengths' and 'respecting the beliefs of others'. Pupils welcome this new arrangement, listening attentively and responding respectfully and maturely.

Pupils are clear about their rights and responsibilities. They respect those with different religious beliefs and those of different races, playing and working alongside each other amicably. Pupils spoken to had a good understanding of how to stay safe online. They are aware of the importance of protecting their personal information and of the need to search the internet safely. Leaders have ensured that displays of pupils' work in corridors and classrooms reflect their raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. The vast majority of pupils present their work neatly and take pride in their books. They concentrate well in lessons, listening to their peers and teachers, contributing appropriately to discussions.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leaders, including governors, have maintained their focus on improving the quality of pupils' education. They have not been distracted by the significant workload associated with the imminent amalgamation. The acting headteacher provides purposeful leadership. She is highly respected by staff and has used this to good

effect in driving forward improvements. Her priority is on improving the quality of teaching for all pupils, so that there is less reliance on small group catch-up lessons to address pupil underachievement in the future. Staff are highly motivated to bring about the improvements needed. They apply what they have learnt through training or from individualised feedback about their practice, promptly. The executive headteacher provides effective and valued support and guidance. She has led senior leaders in a review of the curriculum. This has ensured that pupils experience a balanced and appropriate curriculum, including learning a modern foreign language and full access to the arts.

The responsibility for ensuring that pupil premium funding is spent effectively has been allocated to an assistant headteacher. This has increased the urgency of work in this area. Teachers have a sharper focus on how well disadvantaged pupils are doing and how well teaching addresses their needs. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress are now more robust. They ensure that teachers are aware of the progress pupils are expected to have made by the time they leave the school. This has helped to raise awareness of the importance of high quality teaching throughout the school, as well as increasing the relevance of pupils' targets. Assistant headteachers and year group leaders play an increasingly effective role in supporting teachers to improve their practice. They provide generic training for, and feedback to, all staff, as well as personalised feedback following observation of teaching or scrutiny of pupils' work or teachers' planning. This effective deployment of leaders at different levels is increasing the momentum of change.

The governing body has reconstituted and has a good understanding of the skills of its members. The Chair of the Governing Body, a national leader of governance, is conscious of the need for succession planning and for members to take further responsibility. A number of committees have been established to consider the issues related to amalgamation, including those related to staffing, finance, the curriculum and school development planning. Detailed plans outline the intended outcomes of each committee's work.

External support

Local authority English and mathematics advisers have continued to provide effective support to leaders and teachers. Training for learning support assistants has enabled them to provide good support in mathematics and English. In particular, they have a better understanding of the need for pupils to understand what they have been taught, as opposed to them simply carrying out a series of instructions. The local authority has provided advice and guidance on a range of issues to the governing body in relation to the forthcoming amalgamation. This includes advice on the recruitment of the permanent headteacher of the new primary school. It has brokered the support of the executive headteacher to provide additional leadership capacity. Training provided at Glebe Primary School has been well received. It has given teachers a wider range of strategies to use in supporting pupils to improve their writing.