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13 March 2015

Ms Andrea de Bunsen
Kennel Lane School
Kennel Lane
Bracknell, Berkshire
Bracknell Forest
RG42 2EX

Dear Ms de Bunsen

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kennel Lane School

Following my visit to your school on 11 and 12 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 November 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher 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 Bracknell Forest.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that none is inadequate and more is good by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can do
 - focus their teaching more on telling pupils what they are expected to learn, rather than simply on what tasks they will complete, so pupils are able to assess how well they have done
 - match activities to the different needs of pupils
 - make sure time is not wasted in lessons on poor quality activities
 - let pupils know how well they have done and, where appropriate, how they can improve their work.

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in sixth form, by:
 - ensuring that there is a consistent, whole-school approach to teaching reading and writing skills
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in a range of different subjects.

- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that teachers give pupils more opportunities to think about their learning and work more independently.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - analysing information about pupils' achievement over time, compared to national data, so that the school is secure in judging whether pupils are making expected progress
 - ensuring the impact of additional funding is carefully evaluated so that the school, including governors, know whether this money is being used effectively to support eligible pupils
 - using data about pupils' achievement to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development
 - planning detailed actions for improvement, based on an accurate self-assessment of the school's provision and outcomes
 - making sure that the phonics (matching letters to the sounds they make) approach to teaching reading to younger pupils is embedded across the school
 - ensuring that governors have the information they need in order to understand their role in holding the school fully to account.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 11 and 12 March 2015

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and teachers, teaching assistants, groups of governors, parents, carers and students as well as representatives from the local authority. A visit was made to the inclusion class based at Birch Hill Primary School. The inspector and senior leaders jointly made a series of visits to 15 lessons, particularly to observe the teaching of early reading, writing and mathematics. This monitoring visit did not include evaluating opportunities for students to work more independently.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Systems for regularly checking students' progress are now a well-established feature of the school. Enough data have been accumulated to facilitate meaningful comparisons of progress and attainment in different subjects, classes and key stages as well as to consider the progress of different groups of students. Analysis of most recent data shows that in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form, students are making slightly better progress in English and mathematics than last academic year, continuing the upward trend in achievement. However data reveal significantly slower progress in science this academic year for students of all ages as well as slower rates of progress across core and foundation subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2 than in other key stages.

During this monitoring inspection, students in all key stages, including in the inclusion class, were observed to be making good progress in developing early reading and writing skills and also in mathematics. Since the last visit, new approaches to teaching reading and writing have been successfully implemented in the secondary department. As a result, there is now a systematic and coherent approach throughout the school. Visits to lessons and discussions with teachers and teaching assistants indicate that high-quality training has ensured staff are confident to employ these approaches. Consequently, secondary students are making more significant gains in reading and writing than previously. Additionally, all staff have undertaken training in mathematics. In this subject equally, students throughout the school were observed to be highly motivated by interesting resources and engaging activities culminating in effective learning and progress. In all curriculum areas, teachers take opportunities to reinforce students' knowledge of letters, sounds and mathematical skills.

The quality of teaching

Weaker teaching has been robustly addressed through the use of performance management and individual support packages. All teachers are provided with

opportunities to improve their practice through peer mentoring, observations of skilled colleagues, attendance at courses and, increasingly, through better links with other schools. No teaching in school is inadequate and most teaching is good or better. This is reflected in the improving trend in students' achievement.

Lessons are incredibly carefully planned. In all lessons seen, tasks, resources and levels of adult support were carefully matched to each student's particular needs. Activities were of high quality. Consequently, students are highly participative and generally enthusiastic about their learning, ensuring their progress. Each student's progress is carefully recorded by teachers and teaching assistants and photographs are frequently used to capture and record new learning and to demonstrate to the students how successful they have been.

Teachers' raised expectations are reflected in discussions about learning, rather than tasks to be completed. Students understand that they need to work hard. Staff frequently break lessons down into small parts. For example in two mathematics lessons, one in primary and one in secondary, students completed a series of short tasks with reward breaks following the completion of each task. This resulted in the students displaying positive attitudes towards the learning tasks and working with improving levels of concentration.

Students are routinely involved in evaluating their own learning. This takes many forms. A significant proportion of students are able to discuss how successful they feel their learning has been and accept guidance, given to them verbally, on how to improve their work further. Other methods of self-evaluation and feedback include the use of signing, communication boards and facial gesture. Opportunities for students to express their views about learning and for adults to provide helpful feedback are carefully planned. This level of detail ensures that students with different need types benefit equally from the teaching they receive and previous gaps in attainment are narrowing.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The atmosphere in and around school is positive and happy. Students and their parents and carers agree that support to enable students to manage and improve their own behaviour both at school and at home is excellent. Parents and carers commented on the ready availability of extensive, sensitive support and advice with regard to behaviour management in the home.

Staff demonstrate great skill in managing emotionally volatile students. Training in behaviour management is an essential part of staff induction and continuing professional development. Staff are confident in the support and guidance of senior leaders and serious transgressions of behaviour are relatively infrequent. When these occur, well-known procedures are implemented and disruptions to learning are minimised. Good levels of communication exist with parents, carers and the local

authority regarding small and more serious behaviour issues. Records of incidents and actions are well documented and subsequent learning shared.

The school works tirelessly to prepare students for life beyond school. For example students are supported to undertake work experience and to join sports clubs or activity groups. This helps students improve their social skills and develop greater confidence. Additionally, trips into the local community help students acquire the social behaviours and skills to shop or to use public transport. In school, students think about their own learning and appreciate the rewards they can earn for positive behaviour and diligence in learning. Typically, students enjoy school and work well in different groups and also with adults. Students of all ages and need types mostly behave courteously around school. The significant majority of students attend well and arrive at school and at lessons promptly. A very small minority of students do not attend well enough.

The school's work to keep students safe is effective. Students who are able to express a view know about a range of dangers such as internet safety, traffic safety and racial bullying. Students are confident in the staff to help them should they be worried.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leadership at all levels, including governance, has continued to strengthen. The ambition to secure further improvement is shared by all staff along with greater understanding of how this can be achieved.

The school has become a data-rich organisation. This is having a transformational effect on leadership and teaching as data are well shared and well understood. Phase leaders, subject leaders and teachers keenly understand their accountability for students' progress. Staff know the proportions of students making or exceeding expected progress over time and can make useful comparisons with nationally available data. Wherever an individual student is identified as making less than expected progress, a meeting is held between key staff as well as with parents and carers. An individual 'Way Forward Plan' is agreed to ensure that the right support is swiftly implemented and that all staff employ agreed approaches and strategies.

The impact of additional funding is carefully evaluated. Leaders know precisely what additional funding has been spent on and the difference that this has made to individuals and groups of students. Data indicate that, as a group, disadvantaged students are progressing more quickly than their peers across the curriculum. However, the percentage of looked after children making or exceeding expected progress has declined this academic year. Analysis reveals why this is the case and appropriate steps are being taken.

Information about students' achievement is now being used more clearly to inform the school's self-evaluation of strengths and priorities for improvement. School improvement plans are based on increasingly accurate self-evaluation and are regularly updated. However, school documents are not sharply evaluative and frequently contain too many generalised statements. While the data analysis has highlighted some clear priorities, the response, in defining next steps and acting upon these, is not consistently rapid.

The governing body is well organised into committees, each with a clear role and purpose. As a whole, the governing body now provides a high degree of challenge and scrutiny to the school and this is reflected in the minutes of meetings. Governors have access to all of the information they need through the school, via the local authority or through attendance at courses. Governors have increased the leadership capacity of the school and play a direct role in securing further improvement.

External support

Leaders and governors report positively on the regular and helpful support they receive from the attached advisor, provided by the local authority. Minutes of the most recent monitoring visit indicated clearly that the school needs to sharpen aspects of the self-evaluation and improvement plans. The inspector concurred with this and other recommendations made.