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14 May 2015

Mrs Belinda King
Interim Headteacher
Kobi Nazrul Primary School
Settles Street
Stepney
London
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Dear Mrs King

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kobi Nazrul Primary School

Following my visit with John Lamborn, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 12 and 13 May 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 June 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Tower Hamlets.

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by increasing the proportion of good or better teaching through:
 - using assessment information to plan effective lessons which match pupils' abilities and provide suitable challenge
 - making sure that teachers check pupils' progress carefully in every lesson
 - monitoring pupils' workbooks to ensure they are marked well
 - checking that pupils have time to improve their work by responding to teachers' comments
 - rigorously monitoring lessons and providing developmental feedback and training to teachers so that expectations are raised
 - making lessons more interesting and engaging
 - improving the acquisition of communication skills by planning exciting activities that identify specific vocabulary to be developed
 - ensuring phonics is taught well so pupils have precise knowledge of sounds and letters to apply to their reading, writing and spelling.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - ensuring the school's behaviour policy is consistently applied and evaluating its impact so that poor behaviour and bullying are eradicated
 - improving the management of pupils' behaviour at break times
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that all leaders and managers receive support to develop the skills necessary to be effective in their roles
 - introducing rigorous assessment procedures to ensure early identification of need and measuring the effectiveness of any interventions
 - making sure that subject leaders analyse the achievement of all groups of pupils regularly to identify key priorities for rapid improvement
 - establishing clear priorities for school improvement and producing a plan of action so that everybody understands what is to be done, by when and by whom
 - using the information gathered through monitoring and evaluation to identify the next steps for improving provision and outcomes
 - rigorously holding teachers to account for the implementation and impact of agreed actions
 - ensuring that governors have the skills to challenge and support senior leaders in raising achievement and tackling underperformance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 12 and 13 May 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally around the school. They also met with a group of pupils from Years 3 and 6 to talk about their work. On this visit, inspectors focused on the progress the school has made with regard to the quality of teaching.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection in January 2015, two teachers have left the school. One new teacher has been employed, and the other vacancy is currently filled through the use of agency staff. The substantive headteacher continues to be absent from school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

As a result of consistently high expectations and improving teaching, standards are continuing to rise. School information shows that standards in mathematics, identified by the school as a concern earlier in the year, are also improving.

In some year groups, the rate of progress in writing is lagging behind that in reading and mathematics. In addition, some classes are not catching up as quickly as others. Leaders and teachers are aware where these pockets of weaker performance lie and implementing strategies to address them. School leaders are aware of the differences between cohorts. For example, in one year group there is a significant number of pupils with very complex special educational needs. In this year group average attainment is lower, but the rate of progress compares well to that of other groups in the school.

Regular meetings are held to discuss the progress of groups of pupils and identify any underperformance. These are followed up by meetings between class staff and the inclusion leader to identify any particular support needed for named individuals. This means that teachers know their classes increasingly well and can focus their teaching precisely on the next steps for pupils.

In order to ensure that improvements in pupils' achievement are robust and reliable, leaders commission a range of work from other sources. This includes regular checks on the assessments made by teachers regarding pupils' progress. At the time of the last monitoring inspection, leaders had identified that assessments of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage needed more work. This work has been completed and

the reliability of these assessments improved. Leaders plan to continue to ensure that assessments in all key stages are independently checked.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching over time is improving. Teachers are given significant levels of support and enabled to improve. This support is not only available for weaker teachers; stronger ones are also given opportunities to learn and develop their skills.

Pupils' books show that the quality of feedback is continuing to gradually improve. Where feedback is strongest it challenges pupils to think about their work and deepen their understanding. Weaker feedback consists of comments that do not help the pupil to improve their work, for example, 'Avoid silly mistakes!'

Leaders use a very wide range of strategies to check the quality of teaching and have an accurate view of where strengths and weaknesses lie. All monitoring activities include specific guidance for teachers on how to improve their work further. Consequently, teaching is improving.

There is a very high level of staff turnover, particularly in terms of the teaching team. Around half of the class teachers are leaving the school at the end of this term, and new appointments have been made. This turbulence in staffing means that improvements in the quality of teaching are not secure.

Support staff have received training in several key aspects of their work. This includes how to question pupils effectively and how to provide feedback to pupils about their work. Leaders have introduced a system for the appraisal of support staff, including observations of their work by the inclusion leader. As a result, support staff are involved more effectively in pupils' learning.

The inclusion leader has audited the provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. He has ensured that the right support is given to the right pupils at the right time. The school has introduced focused sessions for pupils who struggle with their reading or phonics (the sounds that letters make). The inclusion leader rightly identifies that there is more work to be done in order to ensure that those who fall behind in mathematics receive similar focused sessions.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The revised behaviour policy, in place at the time of the last visit, is becoming embedded in practice. Attractive posters reminding pupils of the school's expectations in this regard are displayed throughout the building. Pupils say that the new approach has improved behaviour and inspectors agree. At the end of the

spring term, the headteacher analysed all reported instances of poor behaviour and drew relevant conclusions. The number of incidents is decreasing, the majority of behavioural incidents occur in the playground, and the very small number that do occur in class happen when the leading adult is unfamiliar to the pupils.

The school has continued its programme of improvements to the outdoor areas, and this work is ongoing. Pupils use the new play equipment safely at break times, though a few are still concerned about being hit by balls.

The school has taken effective steps to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Leaders work alongside an external agency to support families in the local community and promote high levels of attendance and punctuality. School staff are more rigorous in following up any pupil absence. Consequently, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced from 32 in the autumn term to 14 in the spring term. Leaders report that this number has now reduced even further. Overall attendance remains just below average.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders know the school extremely well. They have quickly developed an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. They make honest and insightful judgments. The senior leadership team has developed a shared view of what is expected of both staff and pupils in this school. They have communicated their expectations effectively. Systems and structures have been introduced which support teachers in developing their skills and enable pupils to achieve more. Teachers say they are challenged by leaders to improve their practice, but alongside this they receive support and training tailored to their individual needs. There will be a significant number of changes to the teaching team, including middle leaders, from September 2015. Senior leaders rightly identify the development of the new middle leadership team to be a priority.

Following the last visit, leaders revised some of the timescales on the school's action plan to make them more realistic. They have also identified how the effectiveness of the plan will be evaluated through regular meetings involving external consultants and the local authority.

Senior leaders and members of the interim executive board engage well with parents and carers to ensure that they remain informed of changes in the school. They also invite parents and carers to attend presentations regarding the potential dangers of the internet, for example. Parents and carers of younger pupils recognise the positive impact of changes in the approach to the teaching of reading. Leaders recognise that updating the school website would further enhance their engagement with parents and carers and the local community.

The interim executive board continues to work effectively to steer the school forwards. They distribute their responsibilities well among members according to their individual skills and experience. They hold regular meetings to discuss issues relating to the quality of teaching, the achievement of pupils, staffing changes, building improvements and finance. They are committed to ensuring that the school improves quickly, while making sure that the duties and responsibilities of a governing body are fulfilled.

External support

The local authority continues to provide a high level of effective support to leaders, particularly in terms of monitoring the school's progress and evaluating the impact of actions taken. The local authority headteacher consultant is taking on a more significant role as senior officers retain oversight of improvements made.

Partnership arrangements with local schools, set up just prior to the last visit, are increasingly providing support for individual teachers and for specific purposes. For example, one teacher spoke of the positive impact a visit to another school had on his own teaching practice. Having gained knowledge of the school, the interim headteacher is increasingly able to identify what support the school needs, and to commission it from the most appropriate source. This demonstrates the school's readiness to start developing its own support structures.