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30 November 2012

Mr Dean Pomeroy
Headteacher
Windmill Primary and Nursery School
Sneinton Boulevard
Nottingham
NG2 4FZ

Dear Mr Pomeroy

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Windmill Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit with Sally Lane, Additional Inspector, to your school on 28–29 November 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2011. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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 Nottingham City.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve pupils' achievement so that it is satisfactory or better by:
 - eliminating inadequate teaching
 - making better use of assessment information to provide all groups of pupils with work that is tailored to their needs to ensure they make good progress
 - linking marking, personal targets and learning intentions effectively so that pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work
 - ensuring that staff are held to account for pupils' progress more effectively.

- Make sure that school leaders and the governing body have the capacity to drive forward and sustain the necessary improvements to provision and pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that the headteacher and senior leadership team have the skills necessary to lead school improvement
 - establishing effective procedures to delegate, train and hold to account school leaders so that they are able to fulfil their responsibilities successfully
 - ensuring that the governing body holds school leaders to account for the necessary improvements to pupils' outcomes.

Special measures: monitoring of Windmill Primary and Nursery School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 28–29 November 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, phase leaders, a group of pupils and representatives from the interim executive board. Inspectors visited all classes to observe teaching and learning, and evaluated a sample of pupils' work.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the substantive headteacher has stepped down. A new executive headteacher was appointed in August 2012. There have been several staffing changes since September 2012, including two permanent appointments and a number of fixed-term contracts. One member of staff remains on long-term sickness absence. An academy order has been granted and the new academy is scheduled to replace the predecessor school on 1 January 2013.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The 2012 unvalidated Key Stage 2 national test results show an improvement on those of the previous year. There was a rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in both English and mathematics. Overall, pupils' rate of progress during Key Stage 2 was good and showed a substantial improvement on that of the previous cohort. Nonetheless, attainment overall remains lower than the national average, with girls outperforming boys, particularly in writing.

The picture is positive with regard to the Year 2 national assessments, with improvements in all subjects and at all levels. However, as at Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment remains below the national average. In other year groups, the school's most recent data confirms that, although there is variation between year groups, all pupils are now making good progress, with some making accelerated progress. All pupils identified as having special educational needs are making similar progress to their peers. Taking account of pupils' often low starting points and the legacy of underachievement that still remains, the school is now strengthening its position to help an increasing proportion of pupils make the good progress necessary to close the gaps in their learning.

The school is working rapidly to lift pupils' attainment further. Staff and pupils understand that there is now a very strong focus on learning and progress, and on

raising attainment. Since the previous monitoring visit, the quality of pupils' learning has improved. Pupils report that they are enjoying their learning better because lessons are more interesting, more interactive and their tasks are generally better matched to their abilities. Teaching is becoming more consistent and rigorous assessment systems quickly identify any pupils who are falling behind and who require additional support.

Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also improving swiftly because of the incisive leadership of a new Early Years Foundation Stage leader. Children are enjoying an improved and exciting range of activities and resources where they are encouraged to explore, experiment and interact with each other. As a result, all children are making good progress from their extremely low levels of knowledge, skill and understanding on entry to the school.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous monitoring visit and is enabling pupils to catch up on existing gaps in their learning. No inadequate teaching was observed. Over half of the lessons observed during the monitoring visit were good. There are a number of good features in all lessons: lessons are generally well planned, behaviour is good and expectations about what pupils can achieve in lessons have been raised. Following intensive training, most staff are clearly identifying the learning intentions, context and success criteria in lesson planning. The impact of this can be seen in pupils' improved engagement in their learning and in their improved understanding of what they have to do succeed and move their learning forward. Most teachers strike the correct balance between pupils listening and working, and pupils report that lessons are much more practical. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly those who are new arrivals at the school, are receiving good support from dedicated staff. However, this work is hindered because of a lack of additional teaching rooms which are resourced appropriately to meet pupils' needs. In those lessons that required improvement, the pace of learning was not sufficiently brisk and pupils, particularly the more able, failed to make good progress because the independent activities did not provide them with the right level of challenge to extend their learning further.

The school's tracking system is robust and each teacher is provided with detailed information on how individual pupils are progressing, including those who are not at expected levels. Teachers are beginning to demonstrate confidence in using this assessment information to ensure that they plan tasks that are better matched to pupils' abilities and are suitably challenging. Systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is providing senior leaders with a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Challenging targets and regular pupils' progress meetings emphasise teachers' accountability for raising pupils' achievement.

Pupils are being provided with improved and more detailed academic guidance. There is evidence of some good practice, where teachers provide pupils with helpful

comments so that they can check and correct their work and understand what they need to do to improve and meet their targets. In some classes, there are growing opportunities for pupils to respond to marking and learn from their mistakes, as well as to evaluate their own and other pupils' work.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve pupils' achievement so that it is satisfactory or better – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite and welcoming. The school is successfully nurturing an atmosphere of care and respect for all, which is reflected in the positive relationships between pupils and adults. Pupils are becoming more enthusiastic learners who respond well to lessons which engage their attention and provide good opportunities for them to work independently or with their peers and take responsibility for their own learning. Where lessons require improvement, pupils remain relaxed rather than focused and enthusiastic learners. Pupils continue to say that they feel safe in school and enjoy good friendships, with no fear of intimidating behaviour. The executive headteacher has rightly identified that there is an urgent need to install a number of additional external doors to remove significant congestion issues at the beginning and end of the school day.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The new executive headteacher has swiftly communicated high expectations to all staff about securing improvement. He is passionate about improving the school and his leadership is having a positive influence in moving the school forward. He is successfully communicating his vision for the school to all staff and is creating a renewed sense of purpose about the school. All staff are taking responsibility for moving the school forward and are working hard to secure improvement. The roles of all leaders are clearly defined and understood and they are regularly involved in a range of monitoring activities. In particular, there are good opportunities for middle leaders to lead the improvements for which they are responsible. As a result, leadership has strengthened. However, the executive headteacher and interim executive board recognise that there is a need to review a few leadership roles because not all leaders are delivering consistently good or better lessons and, consequently, do not demonstrate that they have the necessary skills to drive school improvement.

Senior leaders have reviewed the school's improvement plan. The revised plan complements the local authority's action plan for improvement and sets out broader responsibilities and accountability to senior and middle leaders. The plan sets out specific priorities and actions, with clear timelines and criteria so that senior staff and the interim executive board can measure how well the teaching is improving and the extent to which attainment is rising. This is improving the capacity to sustain

improvements and it is ensuring that there is a consistent impact on improving the performance of teachers and support staff in order to raise attainment.

The interim executive board continues to provide the school with effective support and suitable challenge. They have been pivotal in maintaining momentum in the school's journey throughout an extremely turbulent period.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- make sure that school leaders and the governing body have the capacity to drive forward and sustain the necessary improvements to provision and pupils' outcomes – good.

External support

The local authority is continuing to provide effective support to the school through the timely and astute actions and decisions of the interim executive board. The school has fostered strong links with other local schools within the academy trust which will be sponsoring the school from January 2013. This has enabled the school to draw on external support from a wider range of sources.