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16 December 2013

John Tomlinson
Headteacher
Wellfield Junior School
Dumber Lane
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Cheshire
M33 5QX

Dear Mr Tomlinson

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Wellfield Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 13 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 most recent monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged as having serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in October 2012. 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 the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director Children, Families and Well-Being for Trafford.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Millward

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2012

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that:
 - pupils are more actively involved in their learning in lessons
 - the work pupils complete builds on their existing skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects
 - pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve their work.

- Increase the effectiveness of governors and senior leaders in improving the school by:
 - making sure their view of teaching and what the school does is accurate
 - carrying out the planned review of the effectiveness of the governing body
 - making sure the school's improvement plan concentrates on the main things that will improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

- Raise pupils' attainment and the speed of their progress from the levels they reach at the end of Year 2 by making sure that:
 - pupils who need extra help with their learning receive high-quality teaching
 - leaders, including governors, check how the additional government funding for pupils at risk of not doing so well is spent
 - the gap in standards is closed between pupils who are supported by these additional funds and those who are not.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 13 December 2013

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, representatives from the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector looked at pupils' work and the school documentation, including progress and attendance information. Short visits to lessons also took place.

Context

Since the last inspection, a new Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors have been appointed to the governing body. One class teacher has resigned and a new teacher appointed. One teaching assistant is on long-term absence.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher has worked hard to bring about improvements across the school. He is determined to improve outcomes for pupils and he has implemented systems and procedures which are having a positive impact on school improvement. His clear vision for the school is communicated effectively and shared by all staff.

The quality of teaching has improved. This is because monitoring procedures are more rigorous and are supporting staff to improve their teaching. Lessons are better meeting the needs of all learners and staff are more confident at providing a relevant and purposeful education. The curriculum has been redesigned to ensure coverage of the national curriculum and to help pupils develop their skills across all subjects.

Governors are holding leaders to account for their actions. This is because the headteacher has provided them with detailed information about the performance of all pupils. They have a greater understanding of data and are challenging leaders at all levels to ensure good outcomes for all pupils.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Pupils' achievement has improved. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is significantly higher than the national average at age-related expectations and at the higher level of attainment. The progress pupils make is also improving and in writing is particularly strong.
- The progress of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, which is additional government funding for children in local authority care, are known to be eligible for free school meals, or are children of service personnel, is also good. The gap between their performance and that of other pupils is less than the national average and is reducing over time.
- Pupils who are disabled and have special educational needs make good progress. This is because the ways in which they are supported has changed and is now effective. Pupils are given highly focused and well-targeted interventions to help them catch up with their learning. As a result, pupils' needs are met well.

- Teaching has improved. Teachers are meeting the needs of learners well and teachers are providing learning activities that show high expectations and challenge pupils' thinking. Targeted interventions are delivered which are pitched appropriately for a range of abilities.
- The ways in which teachers mark pupils' work is much improved. Teachers' comments guide pupils well to their next steps in their learning and pupils regularly respond back to teachers' comments.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning. They show perseverance to complete the tasks set and work hard in their lessons.
- Monitoring is more rigorous and provides teachers with useful support to improve the quality of teaching further. For example, one learning walk focused on how well teaching assistants were used in literacy lessons.
- Good links have been made with a local leader of education. This support is received well by Wellfield Juniors and the headteacher is appreciative of the advice given.
- Leaders at all levels are now having a greater impact across the school. For example, subject leaders are now more involved in the monitoring of their subjects and this is quality-assured by the headteacher. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving across all subjects.
- The governing body is more effective. As one governor told the inspector, 'There is no room for complacency.' Governors challenge the leaders and are more involved in all aspects of school development. For example, one governor recently carried out a learning walk focusing on numeracy across the school.
- Leaders have been focused on appropriate issues and have tackled areas of concern.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Although attainment is high in reading, writing and mathematics, the standards reached in writing and mathematics are higher than in reading.
- Tracking procedures have improved and, as a result, teachers know pupils' levels of attainment. However, the way in which leaders identify and track the more-able pupils lacks clarity. Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium are monitored. However, the ability range of these pupils is not always clear.
- The school seeks the views of parents, but this is limited. This is because few parents have responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Although leaders have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses, this has not been set out formally in a self-evaluation document. The headteacher acknowledges this should be recorded formally and shared with all stakeholders. The link between the school's strengths and weaknesses is not aligned tightly enough to the school's development plan.
- The governing body is more effective in its role. However, governors have limited understanding about the performance of all teachers and how this is linked to their pay progression.

External support

The local authority continues to support the school. Core group meetings are held regularly between the headteacher, governors and local authority to monitor the progress that the school is making. Training sessions and support are helping the school in its quest to become a good school. Local authority officers review the performance in school by carrying out monitoring visits. They have facilitated school-to-school support, which is received well.