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1 May 2013

Mr John Tomlinson
Acting 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 30 April 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 second 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 Director of Children's Services 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:
 - pupils who need extra help with their learning receive high-quality teaching
 - leaders including governors, check how well 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 second monitoring inspection on 30 April 2013

Evidence

The inspector met with the acting headteacher, representatives from the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work and the school documentation including progress and attendance information.

Context

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has resigned. A part-time teacher has been appointed and a governor has resigned.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The acting headteacher has maintained a focus on driving forward school improvement. He continues to be well supported by governors, a local outstanding junior school and the local authority. He liaises regularly with parents and training has been provided to help parents support their child's learning. There is a culture developing across the school which is committed to systematic improvement.

The acting headteacher is developing ways in which assessment is used and data are more regularly used to gain an accurate view of pupils' achievements. Individuals and groups of pupils are now tracked carefully and this provides leaders with an overview of the performance of all pupils.

Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning can be seen. This is because all teachers have observed good practice at a local junior school. Local authority officers have observed all teachers and they report the quality of teaching has improved significantly. The acting headteacher regularly monitors the quality of teaching. He has plans to use this information to tailor specific support to individual teacher's needs.

Middle leaders are developing their expertise and are beginning to use more readily data to inform how they will improve their subject areas. They are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring their subject areas. Although they are beginning to link with members of the governing body, this work is currently underdeveloped.

The governing body has embraced the challenge of improving their effectiveness across the school. They are now regularly making purposeful visits to school and use the information to support and challenge senior leaders. They observe learning in lessons and report back on their findings. They have redesigned their committee structure and are now more focused on looking at data and the progress that pupils make. They have a greater awareness of pupil premium funding (additional government funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or those who have a parent in the armed forces) and are monitoring how the funding is used. Governors have received training which has been well received and as a result, they are more informed on how to better hold the leaders to account.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement

- For most pupils, achievement is improving because the quality of teaching is supporting them to make better progress. Data held by the school indicates the majority of pupils are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In many cases, pupils are beginning to make accelerated progress. This is helping them catch up with previous underperformance.
- Attainment and progress by pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is also encouraging. They are achieving equally as well as their peers and in some cases, their progress is better than the other pupils. Due to improvements in how data are recorded, leaders now have a better view about the progress of all groups. Increasingly, this information is now shared with the governing body.
- The acting headteacher has quickly risen to the challenge of leading and managing the school. He is focused on developing the school and improving outcomes for all pupils. He shows great drive and determination to make the necessary changes. Plans of how the school will improve are clear and precise.
- Teaching assistants have received training and are now used more effectively. They have observed good practice in the link school and their working hours have been altered to make sure they continually spend their time supporting pupils' learning. As a result, pupils are beginning to make better progress.
- Attendance data has improved. This indicates pupils are happy to come to school. Attendance data is recorded and monitored.
- Pupils' behaviour is a strength and they show good attitudes to learning. Pupils are keen to learn and persevere to complete tasks in lessons. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in school.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- In some lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This hinders the progress they make. Although teachers are provided with information about the strengths and areas to improve in their teaching, this is not organised effectively enough. As a result, teachers are not always given appropriate help to improve their teaching. The acting headteacher acknowledges that teachers need tailored programmes of support.
- The acting headteacher has received some training to help him lead and manage the school. However, this has not been planned for systematically. Governors and the local authority agree more focused and directed support for the acting headteacher would be beneficial.
- Some aspects of monitoring are not sufficiently focused. For example, learning walks are regularly carried out, but the focus of the monitoring is not always clear. Furthermore, teachers are not rigorously held to account for the progress of their pupils. This is because pupils' progress meetings, to check on the progress made by pupils, have not been held regularly enough.
- The curriculum is in a state of flux. Previous curriculum plans have been abolished and the school has not developed a long-term plan of how the foundation subjects will be taught. As a result, pupils are not developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic way.

External support

Officers from the local authority are reviewing the school's performance as well as providing support to secure improvement. They have sourced a link with a local outstanding junior school. Teachers and teaching assistants have observed lessons which have been judged to be good or outstanding in the link school.

The local authority statement of action is now fit for purpose.