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7 October 2010

Mrs Mary Bonham
Headteacher
Sigglesthorne Church of England Primary School
Main Street
Sigglesthorne
Hull
HU11 5QA

Dear Mrs Bonham

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Sigglesthorne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school 5 and 6 October 2010, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2010. 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 and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – **satisfactory**

Newly Qualified Teachers **may not** 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 the East Riding and the Diocese of York.

Yours sincerely

Paul Lowery
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2010

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in writing, mathematics and science, for all ability groups by:
 - ensuring that the headteacher and teaching staff carefully track pupils' progress and set challenging targets
 - ensuring that teachers make good use of information from assessment to increase significantly the challenge in the work provided
 - providing a good curriculum that accelerates pupils' learning.
- Improve teaching so it is consistently good or better by:
 - systematically and regularly observing teaching
 - setting and monitoring targets for improvement
 - providing effective and individualised professional support to help teachers to improve further.
- Rapidly build good capacity to improve by:
 - identifying more accurately where the school needs to improve and planning how the impact will be monitored
 - increasing the rigour and pace with which developments take place so that agreed changes are implemented by all staff within a swift and measurable time frame
 - ensuring that the governing body fulfils its role effectively so that it holds the school rigorously to account for its overall effectiveness.

Special measures: monitoring of Sigglesthorne Church of England Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 5 and 6 October 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, including six lessons and observing all four teachers. Documents were scrutinised including the school improvement plan. Pupils' work in literacy and numeracy was examined. The inspector met with senior staff, a curriculum coordinator, groups of pupils, a parent, the chair of governors, and the local authority's lead officer who is supporting the work of the school. At the time of the monitoring visit the headteacher was away from the school, but contributed to the evidence base through two extended telephone calls with the inspector.

Context

Since the last inspection, there has been a reorganisation of leadership and management responsibilities including the appointment of an additional post of acting assistant headteacher and support from a consultant headteacher. From September 2010, two of the four classes have new teachers. Pupil numbers have declined; there are now 54 pupils on roll of whom nine are part time. All pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes. Four new governors have been appointed to the governing body.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Results from examinations taken by Year 6 in 2010 show that attainment remains below the national average. However, attainment rose and this represented an improvement on the 2009 results. At Key Stage 1, assessments show that attainment is also below the national average. Evidence observed during the monitoring visit confirmed that standards in writing and numeracy are below national expectations. Too few pupils demonstrate sufficient skills in extended writing. In mathematics, while pupils can correctly complete calculations, many do not demonstrate a mathematical understanding of what they are doing and thus frequently find it difficult to transfer these skills to other problem-solving tasks.

Pupils are now making better progress in their studies. In 2010, overall progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 for Year 6 pupils was just above that seen nationally. However, school monitoring indicates that progress during 2009/10 was variable across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and year groups.

Nearly half of pupils did not make expected progress in reading, while more rapid progress was made by those in Year 6.

Since September 2010, recent improvements in teaching have led to greater progress being made across all classes. An analysis of lessons and pupils' work during this inspection showed that pupils, especially those in Key Stage 2, were making more secure progress in all subjects.

Systems to track the progress made by both individuals and groups of pupils are now in place. External support has been used effectively to collect, verify and interpret pupil performance data. This is enabling staff to carefully identify pupils at risk of underperforming and inform class teachers where extra help is required. A simple but highly effective system is prominently displayed in the staffroom showing which pupils are on target, behind or those making above expected progress, in all core subjects. However, this process is in a relatively early stage of development and its use to target intervention support is yet to be evaluated.

The school has appropriately decided to make the improvement in teaching its first priority in order to raise attainment. This is already starting to impact on pupils making better progress. Pupils have noticed this change and report they are now enjoying their studies and feel they are making better progress. Plans to revise the curriculum are due to be phased in during 2011. However, it was already apparent that staff are working hard to make lessons more stimulating in order to accelerate pupils' learning.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in writing, mathematics and science, for all ability groups – **satisfactory**

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is improving. No inadequate lessons were observed during the monitoring visit. However, teaching is not yet consistently good enough to make up for gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills and thus significantly raise attainment.

Since September, two out of the three Key Stage 1 and 2 classes have had new teachers. There is now greater stability and continuity for all classes. New staff have settled in quickly and have made a significant contribution to the professional dialogue on improving teaching. It is apparent there is a real energy and commitment to change; staff are working well as a team to trial new ideas with the focus on improving pupils' learning.

All staff are using a common lesson planning format. This has improved consistency in teaching. However, insufficient use is made of prior attainment data to plan

activities to meet the needs of individual learners. Pupils are encouraged to make oral contributions; teachers effectively model technical vocabulary. An increased emphasis is being placed on group work, allowing pupils to investigate and enjoy their learning. Consequently, pupils' engagement is starting to improve and they are making better progress. However, too frequently, pupils return to being passive learners. They are heavily dependant on adult support, seeking help too quickly, rather than challenging themselves to solve a problem. Teaching has just started to encourage independent learning. Many pupils do not yet have the skills to investigate, enquire and evaluate, and thus secure a deeper understanding and real appreciation of their studies. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long; here, some pupils can lose concentration. Setting up group activities can take too long and here, the pace of learning slows.

Staff have introduced new approaches to assessing pupils' understanding. Pupils are encouraged to show whether they feel confident in their work, with the 'thumbs-up or down' signal. Staff are using coloured highlighters to show aspects of work that is either particularly good or areas that could be improved. Older pupils are now being shown how to assess their own or others' work. Consequently, in the stronger lessons, pupils are talking to each other about what they need to do to improve and making better progress.

Pupils have the opportunity to benefit from small classes sizes. However, in mixed-age classes some older and more-able pupils still do not receive sufficient challenge. Too frequently, similar work is tackled by the whole class; insufficient expectations are placed on the more able. In some classes, particularly where some pupils have been withdrawn for other activities, numbers are too small to allow all pupils to work alongside others with similar abilities or interests. Here, some pupils lose the opportunity to be stimulated and challenged by their peers.

Better teaching is starting to improve pupils' learning. During the monitoring visit, in one science lesson, pupils were undertaking a practical investigation involving skills and concepts above that normally expected for their age. Pupils were clearly enthralled by the challenge and in this mixed-age group even the youngest was making good progress.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve teaching so it is consistently good or better – **satisfactory**

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher, supported by the recently promoted assistant headteacher, are working in partnership with the local authority to strengthen the capacity of leadership. There has been a reorganisation of responsibilities to more effectively share the tasks of managing change. The two new teaching appointments have also brought experience to the team, including one taking on the role of numeracy

coordinator. The local authority's statement of action has been used to shape and strengthen the school's improvement planning. The right priorities for action have been identified and since September there has been a marked impact on strengthening staffing structures and improving the quality of teaching. However, the plan's capacity to direct longer-term sustainable improvement is limited by insufficient clarity on interim milestones and precisely who will monitor and then evaluate the impact of the actions taken.

A review group has been established, which includes representation from the local authority, school and governing body; a calendar of meetings arranged to oversee the school improvement initiatives. At present, the school leadership remains highly dependent on external advice and support in ensuring improvements are realised at an appropriate pace. Appropriate coaching support and training have been arranged in order to strengthen the school's capacity to lead and embed the improvements required. However, this support is at an early stage and school leaders recognise that external assistance will be an important factor in securing consistently good teaching and raising levels of achievement.

Senior leadership has been strengthened with the internal appointment of an assistant headteacher. However, the local authority and the school recognise that the longer-term leadership structure needs to be agreed in order to secure leadership capacity. Two staff have taken on the role of literacy and numeracy coordinators and are starting to work effectively as a team to strengthen these two critical areas. The local authority and the school recognise that leadership training, in particular in lesson monitoring, needs to be a priority if the target to make all teaching good or better is to be achieved. At present, monitoring the quality of teaching is heavily dependent on local authority support.

Changes to the membership of the governing body have increased the range of professional expertise available. A training programme, commencing on the evening of the monitoring visit, has been scheduled. Governors recognise that the training programme will be critical in increasing the capacity of the governing body to meet its statutory obligations and hold school leadership to account. However, to date, the governing body has not had a demonstrable impact on securing school improvement. The school's three year budget indicates a significant deficit in funding as a result of the fall in pupil numbers. This presents a real risk to the future financial stability of the school and its capacity to make the improvements required. The absence of a realistic future finance and staffing plan impedes the effectiveness of governance.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Rapidly build good capacity to improve – **satisfactory**

External support

The local authority has been proactive in providing external support. The statement of action has been revised and incorporated into the school improvement plan. The local authority appreciates that systems for monitoring and evaluation are weak and that this plan will need to be kept under review in order to secure the school improvements required.

Appropriate additional support has been brokered. The headteacher particularly welcomes the assistance provided by the consultant headteacher. The improvement plan highlights a programme of support from subject consultants, professional training opportunities and links with neighbouring schools. Assistance has been provided to ensure appropriate new appointments have been made to the staff. Additional funding has enabled the temporary increase in leadership posts. Additional guidance will be required to assist the governing body in revising their financial and staffing plans.

The local authority has provided effective and timely assistance during a period when the school is highly dependent on additional support.

Priorities for further improvement

- To ensure the governing body has effective plans in place to secure the financial stability of the school.