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10 February 2011

Miss N Latham
Headteacher
St Patrick's RC Primary School
Livesey Street
Collyhurst
Manchester
M4 5HF

Dear Miss Latham

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Patrick's RC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 and 10 February 2011, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 13 October 2009. 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

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Manchester and the Diocese of Salford.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2009

- In order to raise attainment and improve achievement across the school, the quality of teaching should be improved so that most lessons are good or better by:
 - providing opportunities for staff to develop their skills, share and learn from best practice in a variety of settings
 - ensuring that monitoring of the quality of lessons includes rigorous checking of the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - developing the use of assessment so that planning, questioning and work set are more closely matched to pupils' different levels of skill and ability
 - ensuring that any underperformance is quickly identified and challenged throughout the school, especially that of higher ability pupils and of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - making sure that all requirements for safeguarding are met
 - improving the rigour of the school's procedures for target-setting, analysis and tracking of the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils
 - developing and undertaking a programme of training for governors to improve their role in the strategic leadership of the school
 - increasing the involvement of leaders at all levels in monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.

Special measures: monitoring of St Patrick's RC Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection from 9 to 10 February 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited lessons and saw all of the class teachers who were teaching, scrutinised pupils' work books and the school's documents and met with the headteacher, the two assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and representatives of the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the interim executive board has continued to carry responsibility for the governance of the school. The associate headteacher has been appointed to the permanent post of headteacher. The temporary acting assistant headteacher, with responsibility for leading the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage unit, was recruited to this position on a permanent basis. Two classes continue to be taught by temporary staff, including a temporary assistant headteacher. A teaching assistant is absent from work because of sickness and has been for four weeks. The school roll has continued to experience high levels of change with 36 pupils joining the school and 14 pupils leaving.

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

Attainment across the school remains low, particularly in mathematics and in the current Year 5 and Year 6 classes it is particularly low. For these year groups, progress needs to be accelerated if the school is to reach levels above the government's floor targets. Senior leaders are critically aware of this and have identified those pupils whose progress needs to be improved if the school is to reach the agreed targets. The quality of assessment across the school continues to improve. However, there still remain some instances where the accuracy of ongoing teacher assessment is not yet quite as accurate as it could be.

Current assessment data indicate that, across the school, rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are continuing to improve. However, there remain pockets where some pupils have not made the expected progress since the start of this school year. There is some evidence in books of pupils improving their skills in writing and spelling. Half-termly pupil progress meetings are used effectively to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress and to draw up plans to provide additional help to individuals and groups. Typically, this involves individuals and small groups being withdrawn from their classes to receive extra help from additional adults. Although some of these interventions are beginning to have an impact, which is reflected in the school's assessment of pupils' current achievement, this remains inconsistent.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise attainment and improve achievement across the school by ensuring that any underperformance is quickly identified and challenged throughout the school especially that of higher ability pupils and of pupils who speak English as an additional language – satisfactory

Other relevant outcomes for pupils

The attendance rate, although improving, remains well below average. There are, however, striking examples of improvement in the attendance of individual pupils. This is particularly the case where the school has involved other agencies and worked closely with parents.

The effectiveness of provision

The overall quality of teaching continues to improve; no inadequate lessons were seen and an increased proportion was judged to be good or had good features. Although continuing to improve, there is not yet enough consistency in the quality to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress. A key area that is too variable is in the teaching of phonics, the sounds that letters make. Good progress had been made in introducing regular, daily phonics teaching sessions to all children in the Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. A good development in this area was observed, where a senior member of staff demonstrated the effective teaching of phonics to another member of staff. However, the competencies and skills of staff vary too much, for example, some inaccurate pronunciation and teaching was observed. Although classes are sometimes split into smaller groups, the phonic phase that is being taught is not always tailored to the ability range within the group. Consequently, some pupils are not challenged while others do not get maximum benefit because they need further practice with lower-level skills.

Good relationships between staff and pupils prevail and pupils' behaviour is largely welcoming and positive. This is particularly the case in one class, where the temporary assistant headteacher has ensured that good relationships have improved pupils' attitudes to learning. The introduction of a common format for lesson planning is beginning to help teachers to modify the work set to meet the full range of pupils' abilities better. However, although planning always identifies which pupils speak English as an additional language, their needs within lessons are not always met. The work of teaching assistants continues to improve, however, there are times, particularly within whole-class teaching sessions, when their work is unfocused or is not directed at the pupils with the greatest need.

Since the last monitoring inspection there has been a whole-school drive to improve the provision in mathematics. More opportunities are being provided for pupils to practise their skills in mental arithmetic and early signs are that this is being beneficial. As part of this drive the Year 5 and the Year 6 classes each have one weekly lesson with two teachers. Two of these lessons were observed and judged to be beneficial because pupils received more individual attention, were taught strategies for tackling problems and had the

opportunity to tackle statutory assessment test questions. However, opportunities were missed to identify and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

The marking of pupils' work continues to improve. Some good examples were observed in English; however, marking is generally less well developed in mathematics. The use of 'tickled pink', where learning intentions have been achieved and 'green for growth', where further work or improvement is needed is understood by pupils. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the detail that is provided to focus pupils on how to improve their work. The practice of offering pupils verbal feedback is sound but does not provide pupils with a written record to remind them what they need to do to improve their work.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage unit the quality of provision continues to improve. Children are clear about their daily routines, such as using the interactive whiteboard to move their name from the absent list to the present list.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching so that most lessons are good or better by developing the use of assessment so that planning, questioning and work set are more closely matched to pupils' different levels of skills and ability – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The greatest success of the interim executive board has been in recruiting a substantive headteacher following a national recruitment campaign and a period of uncertainty. This has been enhanced by the appointment of the acting temporary assistant headteacher to the permanent post. There continues to be evidence of the impact of the headteacher's work and that of the assistant headteacher. For example, there are continued improvements in the quality of teaching and to the provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. The headteacher and acting assistant headteacher continue to evaluate robustly the quality of teaching and learning across the school and to provide challenge and support where it is most needed. At other levels, the impact of leadership is variable. The special educational needs coordinator has put new systems in place, such as a thorough needs analysis and provision map to show how pupils' additional needs are being met. The temporary assistant headteacher, with responsibility for numeracy, has begun some promising work, such as identifying gaps in pupils' mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding, but this has yet to have a full impact on the attainment and progress of pupils. Although some members of staff are developing their roles as subject leaders appropriately, leadership at this level remains underdeveloped.

Safeguarding remains a high priority for the school and its staff. At the time of the monitoring inspection the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks was fully up to date. Partnerships with key members of the parish are improving. For example, the new parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and has led masses for individual classes. A member of the adjacent convent volunteers and helps out in the school on a regular basis.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Strengthen leadership and management by: making sure that all requirements for safeguarding are met; improving the rigour of the school's procedures for target-setting, analysis and tracking; increasing the involvement of leaders at all levels in monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning – satisfactory

External support

Support for the school has been satisfactory. The local authority continues to support the work of the interim executive board well. There is a clear plan and timescale in place to re-establish a governing body to replace the interim executive board from September 2011.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to monitor closely the attainment, work in books and progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils whose attainment is critical if the school is to meet its statutory targets.
- Improve teachers' effectiveness within lessons at meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Improve the quality of teaching in phonics.