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3 December 2010

Mrs Helen York
Headteacher
Christ Church Pellon CE (VC) Primary School
Sandbeds Road
Halifax
HX2 0QQ

Dear Mrs York

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Christ Church Pellon CE (VC) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 1 and 2 December 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 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

Newly-qualified teachers may be appointed subject to discussions with HMI.

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 Calderdale.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

Raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in both key stages by:

- rigorously tracking pupils' progress and intervening when pupils make insufficient progress
- further developing the newly-introduced programme for learning sounds and letters in Key Stage 1, ensuring all staff involved have a good understanding of the programme and pupils have opportunities to reinforce their learning through written work
- developing further opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to write more extensively.

Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:

- making effective use of the information gained from tracking pupils' progress to provide work which closely matches their needs
- increasing the pace of lessons and setting much higher expectations for the amount and quality of work to be completed in lessons.

Improve pupils' behaviour by:

- ensuring that all staff adhere to the policy for managing behaviour
- ensuring that, where appropriate, pupils' individual learning plans have detailed strategies to ensure that disruptive behaviour does not impede the learning of others.

Develop effective delegation within the senior management team by:

- ensuring that all members play an active role in school improvement, thereby reducing the existing work load of the headteacher.

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Christ Church Pellon CE (VC) Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 1 and 2 December 2010

Evidence

On the days of the inspection Halifax and other areas experienced heavy snowfall. Many parents withdrew children early on the first day and the school was closed to pupils on the second day. For this reason some inspection activities were curtailed. The inspector visited 7 lessons, which included all newly-recruited teachers. He scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and staff. He had telephone conversations with the local authority School Improvement Partner and a governor.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been some changes to the school's context. Three teachers resigned and vacated their posts from the end of the summer term and one teacher has changed her contract from full-time to part-time. One teacher is currently on maternity leave. Five new teachers took up post in September 2010; which includes two temporary newly-qualified teachers and a part-time teacher. Following a period of absence one teacher is currently on a phased return to work. The headteacher is planning to take maternity leave during the later part of the spring term 2011 and the local authority School Improvement Partner will take on the role of acting headteacher during this period.

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

The greatest success of the school has been in raising attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. The 2010 unvalidated results show improvements in both English and mathematics at both Level 4 and the higher Level 5. This improvement means that attainment was broadly average. However, standards in mathematics lagged behind those in English and boys generally did better than girls. While this would suggest that mathematics is a relative weakness at the school the school's own data indicates that across the school, attainment in English and mathematics is generally similar. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2010, although improved, continues to be below average. The greatest improvements were in reading. The school's close tracking and regular assessments of pupils' levels demonstrate that rates of progress are continuing to improve. However, there remain some small groups of pupils who are not yet making the expected gains in their literacy and numeracy skills each term and some of this variation relates directly to the quality of teaching. The best rates of progress continue to be found where teaching is strongest and where there has been continuity of teaching staff. The use of targets is continuing to develop. Pupils generally know that they have targets and they are proud of their achievements when their targets have been met. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the ways that some teachers set, display and use pupils' targets. Of note is the work

that has been done by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and learning mentor to discuss the individual education plans (IEPs) with pupils, which is helping pupils to understand their small steps and what they need to do to reach their targets. Older pupils state that they enjoy the extended opportunities that they now have for developing longer pieces of writing.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in both key stages by rigorously tracking pupils' progress and intervening when pupils make insufficient progress; developing the programme for learning sounds and letters in Key Stage 1; improve opportunities for pupils to write more extensively – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Observations of lessons, break times and pupils moving around the school show that behaviour is continuing to improve. In lessons behaviour was never less than satisfactory and sometimes good and outstanding. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Both staff and pupils state that they understand and value the behaviour management system. Pupils believe that rules, rewards and sanctions are fair. Although most pupils behave well and are positive about school and learning there remains a small core of pupils whose attitude to learning is sometimes wanting, for example they are easily distracted and do not always concentrate. These pupils are managed well and their behaviour is not allowed to disturb the learning of others. The new teachers understand the importance of following the school's agreed behaviour management systems and see the value of a consistent approach; some state that they know they will need to continue to work hard to ensure that good classroom behaviour is maintained.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that all staff adhere to the policy for managing behaviour and ensuring that pupils' disruptive behaviour does not impede the learning of others – satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

The lessons that were observed on this visit show clearly that the quality of teaching still varies greatly; while some was observed to be securely good, some was barely satisfactory. Overall, more lessons had good features. Consistent use of the behaviour management systems, the use of rewards and sanctions means that classrooms are calm and orderly. Lessons start promptly and are purposeful. Mostly clear learning objectives, in the form of 'I can statements' are shared routinely with pupils. However, when learning intentions are not clear the quality of teaching and learning suffers as a consequence. Success criteria are similarly shared with pupils. However, opportunities continue to be missed for teachers to make their expectations of pupils' explicit, in terms of the quality and quantity of work that

should be produced in a given time. Consequently a small number of pupils still do not use their time as productively as possible. The new teachers in Key Stage 2 are working well together as two distinct teams. They are clear about the need to secure improved rates of progress of their pupils. The introduction of more ability groups was observed to be having an impact, both in improved behaviour of some pupils and in meeting the learning needs of other pupils, particularly the more able in literacy. While some good examples of marking was evident in some pupils' books, practices still vary in the level of detail that is provided to pupils in order to help them to improve their work.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making effective use of the assessment information to provide work which closely matches pupils' needs and increasing the pace of lessons and setting much higher expectations for the amount and quality of work completed in lessons – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The work of the senior leadership team continues to have a positive impact. The most notable successes are the good support and direction that has been provided to the new team of teachers in Key Stage 2. Consequently the whole school behaviour management policy is now being implemented effectively and many lessons have good features, for example, they get off to a good start and learning objectives are routinely shared. There has been some success in supporting teachers to improve their work. The deployment of staff coupled with the new grouping of pupils in Key Stage 2 is helping to improve rates of progress. There have been further developments with the role of leaders outside the leadership team including the appointment of a new mathematics subject leader. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has made good progress in implementing plans to provide more opportunities for developing reading, writing and mathematics skills indoors and out. The SENCO continues to work with the education welfare service and this has reduced the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Safeguarding remains a high priority for the school and its staff. The single central record of recruitment and vetting checks confirms that all newly-recruited members of staff have been subjected to appropriate checks. The deputy headteacher has attended the necessary training on child protection to allow her to undertake the role of child protection coordinator in the headteacher's absence. The appointment of two additional governors by the local authority, with appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of schools is clearly contributing to some stronger governance. However, there is scope for the governing body to be more proactive in improving their work and in providing more effective challenge and support to the school.

- Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement: Develop effective delegation within the senior management team by ensuring that all members play an active role in school improvement – satisfactory

External support

Support for the school continues to meet its needs. The local authority has continued to provide staff training, funding for additional staff and on-going support. For example, the local authority School Improvement Partner is expected to take on the role of acting headteacher when the headteacher takes maternity leave during the spring term.

Priorities for further improvement

- Further improve teaching so that more is consistently good or better, particularly by
 - eradicating the small pockets of weak teaching
 - ensuring that pupils know how much work they need to complete in the available time
 - ensuring that marking becomes more like the best examples.