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18 November 2010

Mrs S Malam
Headteacher
Courthouse Green Primary School
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Bell Green Road
Coventry
CV6 7JJ

Dear Mrs Malam

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Courthouse Green Primary School

Following my visit with Philip Winch, additional inspector, to your school on 16–17 November 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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

One newly qualified teacher may be appointed to either the Early Years Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1.

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 Coventry.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Quicken the rate of progress in English and mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - creating an immediate sense of urgency to raise attainment through well-judged, time-limited goals
 - raising the level of expectation for learning so that all pupils are challenged in their work
 - setting challenging targets in all classes for this and future school years, based on accurate teacher assessment, for both individuals and groups of pupils
 - giving pupils ambitious individual targets; ensuring that they understand what they need to do to move forward in their learning so that they meet national expectations and are prepared for the next stage in their lives.

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching by:
 - increasing the amount of good teaching and eliminating all that is inadequate
 - achieving a whole-school approach to teaching and learning through well-targeted professional development and the sharing of good practice
 - using regular assessments of progress to plan work that ensures all pupils make good progress
 - consistently implementing the new marking policy and clarifying how well pupils have done and what they need to do next.

- Develop the expertise of leaders across the school and ensure all contribute to school improvement by:
 - making explicit to all staff, their roles and responsibilities
 - holding staff to account for learning and progress in their classes and areas of responsibility
 - establishing a professional development plan for all staff
 - improving the governors' role in challenging and holding the school to account

Special measures: monitoring of Courthouse Green Primary School**Report from the second monitoring inspection on 16–17 November 2010****Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and data and met with: the headteacher; staff; a group of pupils; governors including the Chair of the Governing Body; the school's consultant; the School Improvement Partner; and a representative from the local authority. All full-time teachers and most part-time teachers were observed teaching at least once during the inspection. Pupils' work was examined in situ.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the school has moved into a new building. Enhanced resource provision for 10 statemented pupils with language and communication difficulties is now provided and managed by the governing body. Four teachers and two teaching assistants have left the school; nine teachers and four teaching assistants joined in September. Following the resignation of the former coordinator for special educational needs (SENCO), the senior management team has been restructured; leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage and SENCO are new to their roles since September 2010. The deputy headteacher has tendered her resignation and a permanent replacement has been appointed to take up post in January 2011. The school's standard number has changed from 60 to 90. There are now three Reception classes and all other year groups will expand from two to three classes as these pupils move through the school.

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

Unvalidated results of tests taken by Year 6 pupils in 2010 indicate that attainment remains low. The previous decline in standards, however, has been halted, particularly in writing and mathematics. Attainment at Level 4 has improved in English by 10 percentage points and 11 percentage points in mathematics. Level 5 attainment has increased by eight percentage points in English and 11 in mathematics. This equates to an encouraging start towards closing the significant gap between the school's results and national averages. Effective teaching in Year 6 ensured that pupils made good progress but not enough to compensate fully for their previous underachievement over time. The variable quality of teaching in Years 3 to 5 and high staff turnover resulted in pupils making less than expected progress between September 2009 and June 2010.

A similar picture emerges in Key Stage 1, where the pattern of decline in writing and mathematics has halted. Nonetheless, the absence of a systematic approach to the teaching of literacy resulted in a further decline in pupils' attainment in reading.

From September, the school introduced a published scheme that provides staff with a structure to teaching literacy to the many pupils that have fallen behind. Observations of this new approach in action demonstrated that these pupils are enjoying the sessions, beginning to develop proficiency in using their knowledge of letters and sounds in reading and writing and working productively in lessons. Pupils are showing a desire to read because the school has invested heavily in the purchase of good quality literature. Most pupils are producing satisfactory amounts of work with marked improvement in the care and attention given to presentation since the last monitoring visit. The quality of handwriting is generally weak across the school.

Children make good progress from their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good quality provision. The school's data show that progress in Key Stage 1 this term in English and mathematics is satisfactory; in Key Stage 2 it is uneven especially in English and where weaknesses in teaching remain.

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

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in English and mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is consistently satisfactory or better. Pupils confirm that new and effective systems of rewards and incentives are appreciated. They are having an impact on improving pupils' attitudes and dispositions to learning and raising aspirations. Attendance has improved in response to decisive actions by the school. It is currently above average and the proportion of persistent absentees is beginning to diminish. Pupils enjoy using the latest information and communication technology widely to support and enhance their learning across the curriculum. Year 6 pupils are very positive about recent improvements in the school.

The effectiveness of provision

Inspection findings concur with external advisers' views of the quality of work in classrooms. Since the last monitoring visit teaching has improved. There is evidence of a higher frequency of good or better teaching, but pockets of inadequate teaching remain in Key Stage 2. Strong aspects of teaching include: effective use of assessment; probing questioning to extend pupils' thinking; practical and tempting activities; high expectations; and confident subject knowledge. Teachers are pitching the work accurately because planning is underpinned by secure assessment information about pupils' prior learning brought about through rigorous training and moderation processes. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers demonstrate competent teaching skills but learning is not always moved on quickly enough and opportunities are missed to extend the more-able pupils' knowledge and understanding. Additional adults are not always deployed effectively so that their

support accelerates pupils' learning and productivity throughout the lesson. Inadequate teaching is typified by teachers' lack of subject knowledge and proficiency in using assessment information. Inappropriate activities do not enable pupils to achieve the planned learning objective.

Marking seen in pupils' books shows that all staff are now following the school's policy satisfactorily. In some classes marking is exemplary in promoting pupils' progress.

The curriculum has been strengthened with the introduction of a published scheme. This ensures that every pupil has access to full coverage of National Curriculum subjects. In addition, it provides opportunities to make links between subjects through themes to deepen pupils' understanding and their ability to make connections. Pupils enthuse about the new curriculum; monitoring its effectiveness is in the early stages of development. There are not enough opportunities in all subjects for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills.

The SENCO has introduced secure systems to identify and improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Linked to a systematic approach to setting and reviewing suitable targets, provision is now satisfactory. Teaching staff are being held to account for the progress that these pupils make, although it is too soon to evidence measurable impact. Staff in the speech and language department provide support for the part-integration of statemented pupils in mainstream classes. Training non-specialist staff in catering for these pupils' needs has begun but will require strengthening as their integration develops.

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

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching by eliminating all that is inadequate and ensuring that all pupils make good progress – satisfactory.
- Ensure that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum providing rich opportunities for high-quality learning to secure pupils' accelerated progress – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management continue to improve because the headteacher leads with authority and demonstrates effective leadership skills for others to emulate. Senior leaders have not yet managed to eradicate inadequate teaching but are developing skills in identifying strengths and weaknesses accurately through increased opportunities to observe lessons. However, they are not always focused sufficiently on the quality of learning that follows from the teaching. Among them are practitioners capable of demonstrating outstanding teaching. The school does not always capitalise on this to maximum effect, for example, by showcasing their skills enough or placing them in close proximity to staff that would benefit most.

Termly job plans are bringing greater clarity to the work of leaders in addressing the school's priorities. As their confidence grows, the headteacher is gradually delegating more responsibility to senior leaders, releasing time for strategic planning, its implementation and evaluation. Governance continues to play an important part in driving improvements, supporting change and holding the school to account for pupils' achievements. The move from the old building to the new has been managed successfully and has ensured routines have been established quickly. It is to the school's credit that the agenda for change and improvement has continued to take priority during this challenging time.

There has been a sea-change in culture amongst staff who show increasing willingness to accept and act upon the feedback they receive about their performance. They are held accountable for pupils' performance through regular progress meetings led by senior leaders and managers. These have recently been injected with a greater degree of challenge following a demonstration session led by the School Improvement Partner.

Time invested in selecting published schemes to strengthen the curriculum and train staff in its implementation has been beneficial. The school recognises the need to evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness and to capitalise upon subject leaders' specialist knowledge to raise achievement across the curriculum. This is work in progress. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers responding to a recent school questionnaire consider that their children enjoy school and are making good progress.

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

- Develop the expertise of leaders across the school and ensure all contribute to school improvement – satisfactory

External support

The local authority has listened and responded to the school's request to develop a more joined-up approach to its support. This has been beneficial in ensuring that the school receives consistent messages about its performance. The local authority is aware that the governing body requires consistently good quality clerking at governors' meetings. Valued expertise has been brokered from other schools to support Courthouse Green in developing provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The local authority is providing good relevant support.

Priorities for further improvement

- Eradicate inadequate provision in Key Stage 2.
- Provide unequivocal evidence of the impact that new approaches are having on learning.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating provision to raise achievement.

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- Develop staff's expertise in meeting the needs of pupils with significant speech and language difficulties.