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10 March 2011

Mr McDonough
Headteacher
Hurst Green Church of England Primary School
Hurst Green
Etchingam
East Sussex
TN19 7PN

Dear Mr McDonough

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hurst Green Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 March 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly Qualified Teachers may 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, the Director of Children's Services for East Sussex and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- **Improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise achievement by:**
 - embedding the use of assessment information to set accurate, understandable and challenging targets for all pupils
 - giving pupils clear guidance during lessons and through marking of work so that they know how to improve.

- **Improve opportunities for learning by all pupils by:**
 - creating a common and shared understanding of the school's curriculum, ensuring lesson plans are always focused on what pupils need to learn next
 - taking pupils' interests into account and adapting teachers' medium-term and daily planning accordingly.

- **Ensure that leaders and managers accelerate change by:**
 - evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour and planning carefully for improvement
 - monitoring and evaluating all initiatives so that effective practice becomes embedded and inconsistencies are eliminated
 - giving subject leaders opportunities to develop teaching and learning in their subjects so they can provide targeted support for staff.

- **Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that safety testing records are immediately updated.**

Special measures: monitoring of Hurst Green Church of England Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 March, 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed eight lessons, scrutinised documents and pupils' work, had discussion with teachers and pupils and met with the interim headteacher, the chair and vice chair of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and a representative from the Diocese of Chichester.

Context

The school has settled into its new building, adjacent to the previous site. Work is continuing on outdoor areas. The substantive deputy, who is on maternity leave, taught Class 1, a mixed-aged class of Reception and Year 1 pupils. The class teacher from Class 2, a mixed-aged class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, has been deployed to teach the substantive deputy's class. Class 2 is now being taught by a teacher on a temporary contract.

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

Last summer's Key Stage 1 assessments showed significantly higher-than-average attainment. The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching Level 4 or higher in both English and mathematics was also above average. Systematic tracking of pupils' current progress indicates continuing improvement, more so in English than in mathematics, with ambitious targets set for individuals and different groups. School tracking suggests that almost all Year 6 girls should reach Level 4 or higher in both English and mathematics this summer, with a quarter expected to achieve Level 5 in both subjects. School tracking also suggests that half of the Year 6 boys will reach Level 4 in both subjects. This gender gap is being tackled through well-directed questioning in lessons and through careful grouping of pupils for discussion, investigation and practical work.

Pupils enjoy writing, especially when able to choose subject and style. While they show imagination and variety of approach, their work is not always technically accurate, spelling in particular. They are keen to progress and respond constructively when teachers combine encouragement with specific guidance on how to improve. They work happily and productively together. Opportunities to assess each other's work are now more frequent but pupils have not yet developed the skills to make the most of this.

Judgement

Progress since the last inspection in the areas for improvement:

- improving teaching and learning, and raising achievement – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils are responding positively to a broader range of teaching styles and to changes in the curriculum. They are continuing to develop skills that will serve them well in the future. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent.

The effectiveness of provision

More confident and creative approaches to curriculum development, lesson planning and teaching are having a positive impact on learning. Pupils respond enthusiastically to cross-curricular projects that are well matched to their interests and skills. Everyone feels involved and takes pride in the final outcome, whether it is a presentation to parents and carers or a substantial display of writing and art work.

Teaching strengths include: effective use of open questions to prompt independent thinking and to check pupils' understanding; generally secure subject knowledge; flexibility of approach; and confident use both of modern technology and, when appropriate, of more traditional resources such as mini-whiteboards to ensure that every pupil responds to questions. Pupils lose focus, however, when the pace is slow or too much time is allowed for an activity. Teachers, rightly, encourage pupils to work collaboratively but do not always ensure that each group knows how to tackle a given task and that all pupils are participating equally.

Development of an online learning platform, accessible at home and at school, is making a valuable contribution to teaching and learning and to the school's success in helping parents and carers support their child's progress. As well as work to be marked, pupils happily post examples of their writing on the learning platform for others to read and comment on.

Judgement

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improving opportunities for learning by all pupils – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

With strong support from the local authority, the governors and interim headteacher are establishing the systems needed to implement an ambitious vision for the school. Their action plan closely matches areas for improvement identified at the last full inspection, and has clear targets and lines of accountability. Subject leaders are more confidently taking charge of teaching and curriculum development in their areas. The impact can be seen in pupils' improving attainment and progress.

Appropriate child protection procedures are in place, including training of governors and staff. Care is taken to ensure that risks associated with current demolition and construction work are minimised and regular checks made on all aspects of health and safety. Risk assessments are robust when pupils are taken off the school site.

Judgement

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensuring that leaders and managers accelerate change – good.
- ensuring that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that safety testing records are regularly updated – good.

External support

The school has been exceptionally well supported by local authority advisers and the School Improvement Partner, as critical friends and expert practitioners. Guidance on management, curriculum and teaching has been timely and practical.

Priorities for further improvement

- The key issues identified in the May 2010 Ofsted report continue to be priorities for further improvement.