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10 March 2011

Mrs Catherine Taylor
The Consultant Headteacher
Adisham Church of England Primary School
The Street
Adisham
Canterbury
Kent
CT3 3JW

Dear Mrs Taylor

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

Following my visit to your school on 16 and 17 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2010. 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 – 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 and the Director of Children's Services for Kent and the Director for Education for the Diocese of Canterbury.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - increasing the proportions of pupils reaching and exceeding the expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science
 - improving spelling and punctuation weaknesses and pupils' ability to use interesting vocabulary
 - accelerating the progress of pupils with special educational needs by ensuring that work always builds on their earlier attainment in the basic skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - increasing the proportion of teaching that is good or better and, as a matter of urgency, eliminating any inadequate teaching
 - ensuring that work is carefully matched to all pupils' capabilities and that staff make consistent use of strategies to manage their behaviour
 - providing individual education plans which show precise steps in literacy and numeracy for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels use self-evaluation more rigorously to monitor the progress made by all groups of pupils and eliminate weaknesses in teaching
 - setting challenging targets for improvement and holding staff to account for pupils' progress
 - improving school improvement planning and evaluation by setting precise attainment targets and monitoring and evaluation criteria
 - developing middle leaders' monitoring roles so they can have a greater impact on improving teaching.

Special measures: monitoring of Adisham Church of England Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 March 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised key strategic documents and met with the consultant headteacher, headteacher elect, middle managers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also met informally with a group of pupils, conducted a work analysis of English, mathematics and science books and observed eight lessons and one assembly.

Context

The school still continues to receive significant support from the local authority through the consultant headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed and will join the school after the Easter break.

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

The good progress pupils are making since the start of this academic year and identified during the last monitoring visit has been maintained. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are doing as well as their classmates. The rigorous approach to data analysis has been continued and teachers know their pupils very well. Consequently, learning has become far more individualised for pupils. For example, higher attaining Year 6 pupils are undertaking specific project work in English to ensure that they are challenged effectively and can develop levels of independence. Equally, girls who are not making sufficient progress in mathematics are being given specific one-to-one support. The proportion of good progress continues to be stronger in reading than in writing, but strategies to improve pupils' writing are continuing to have an impact and there are examples of good-quality work in displays around the school and in pupils' work. Consequently, the differences in achievement between reading and writing progress are beginning to even out. Teachers are good at encouraging a wide use of vocabulary which has extended to other subjects like mathematics. This has also led to improvements in writing, including the presentation of work in other subjects such as history and science. Writing lessons continue to be well planned and organised, as a result of the importance given to this area of the curriculum. During the visit, Years 5 and 6 pupils were observed planning for writing a mystery story. The importance of this was articulated by one pupil who stated, 'I find it really difficult to start with an empty page in front of me.'

Despite the good progress currently being achieved, attainment in English and mathematics is below average and may well fall further. This would represent inadequate progress overall for the year group in relation to their starting point at the beginning of Key Stage 2 despite the positive current picture. This is the result of

significant previous underachievement which affects the oldest year group more than any other. School data indicate that pupils in other year groups who are reaching or exceeding expected levels in these subjects are improving as they have less 'catching up' to do.

Analysis of pupils' books and discussion with staff show that pupils' attainment in science is much nearer to the national average in Year 6. A tracking system has been introduced and teachers are now assessing pupils' work after they have completed a unit of work. This was an identified priority for further improvement after the last monitoring visit and the school is now in a better position to track pupils' progress and judge their attainment in science. Pupils are particularly pleased with the opportunities to take part in practical and problem-solving lessons in science.

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

- raise pupils' attainment and improve pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The school successfully promotes the importance of attendance. Consequently, attendance levels have continued to improve and are now high. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Behaviour is good and contributes well to pupils' effective learning. Pupils say that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with quickly. Pupils show consideration for each other and feel safe. Relationships within the school are positive and supportive.

The effectiveness of provision

The continuing improved progress made by the pupils reflects the high proportion of better teaching and learning especially in English and mathematics. During the visit the large majority of teaching was found to be good with nothing that was less than satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in all year groups and effective teaching and learning have been maintained since the last monitoring inspection. Pupils have a secure understanding about their learning because teachers explain lesson intentions clearly along with success criteria. Teachers maintain a good pace to learning so that, in most cases, no time is wasted. Years 5 and 6 pupils quickly prepared as they looked to produce scale drawings of the school grounds in mathematics. Equally, Years 3 and 4 pupils worked rapidly at their writing about a recent visit to the Kent Life Museum and Key Stage 1 pupils began their work on position and direction with much enthusiasm.

There is still a strong match of work to pupils' needs and abilities, although occasionally higher attaining pupils could be challenged more or be offered more opportunities to work independently. Equally, there is the odd occasion when teachers are not specific enough about the amount of work they expect pupils to complete in a lesson. Pupils work well with each other and partner discussion is a

strong and effective feature of most lessons. Teachers are good at ensuring that pupils are engaged with their work by their regular interactions with all ability groups where they offer challenge or support. Teachers ensure the time spent using questioning techniques takes contributions from a wide group of pupils to ensure their level of understanding. Teaching assistants continue to make a good contribution to pupils' learning especially lower attaining pupils and those with special needs and/or disabilities.

Feedback to pupils about their work is developing well. Good oral feedback is provided to them in lessons and work is marked very regularly. There is now a greater focus on pupils receiving individualised targets in writing and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants often refer to these in lessons as do the pupils, although there is limited reference in teachers' marking.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The consultant headteacher has continued to provide very effective leadership for the school. She has contributed significantly to the school's improvement especially over the current academic year. Importantly, capacity has become more distributed and is no longer just resting on one person. A new headteacher has been appointed and appropriate transition arrangements are in place.

The strengthening of middle management has continued successfully. In addition to analysis of data, pupils' work and teachers' planning, observations of lessons have begun. Subject leaders have a wealth of data available and talk confidently about the performance of individuals, groups and cohorts. They have a clear understanding about what is being done to support pupils who find learning difficult as well as those pupils who need to be challenged regularly. All teachers are now in a strong position to track the progress their pupils are making. A culture of assessment for learning is prevalent through the school. Middle managers are now effectively contributing to improvements in provision and pupils' learning and progress. This is because they are joining the information they gather together to produce complete pictures of pupils and their performance. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and about what needs to improve further. Accountability is growing as a result of effective planning for improvement and challenging targets.

Governors continue to improve their effectiveness. Members of the governing body are increasingly more visible. Regular meetings between the consultant headteacher and chair of governors regarding pupil performance have ensured that there is continuing challenge to staff about the performance of pupils. Governors have a good understanding of what the school does well, and where there is still work to do, especially with regard to the areas of improvement identified during the

inspection in January 2010. However, they are not fully and systematically involved in evaluating other aspects the school.

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

- improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels – good.

External support

There is good support from the local authority through the position of the consultant headteacher. Additional effective support has also continued for teaching, Early Years Foundation Stage and science. The local authority is beginning to withdraw its support now that the school is able to sustain its own improvement.