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17 March 2011

Mrs L Parmenter
Acting Headteacher
Callands Primary School
Callands Road
Callands
Warrington
Cheshire
WA5 9RJ

Dear Mrs Parmenter

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Callands Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 and 16 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 on 12 and 13 November 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 – outstanding

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed subject to the following qualifications: limited to a maximum of one appointment in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2.

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 Warrington.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 12 and 13 November 2009.

- Raise standards and achievement by:
 - improving teaching by increasing the pace and expectations in lessons
 - making sure that the work set for the pupils is challenging and closely matches their abilities, particularly for the more-able pupils.

- Improve the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving the monitoring of children's progress
 - creating more opportunities for independent learning
 - ensuring that an effective Early Years Foundation Stage leader is involved in teaching the Reception children.

- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - introducing strategies to monitor rigorously the effectiveness of the school's work
 - ensuring that teachers plan and teach lessons that enable all groups of pupils to make good progress
 - ensuring that governors are provided with the training and information they need to support and challenge the school.

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Callands Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection from 15 to 16 March 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority.

Context

Since the last inspection, the school continues to be led by the acting headteacher. She is supported by an executive headteacher for two days each week and an acting deputy headteacher who has full-time responsibility for teaching a class. There has been some instability to staffing caused by absence. A temporary teacher currently covers one member of staff on long-term absence. The governing body has appointed one new governor and there is a vacancy for a parent governor.

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

Pupils' progress in learning is improving sharply. School data tracking is outstandingly improved and this shows that pupils are accelerating the rate at which they learn. Pupils are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for them by the year end. Analysis of the data by school leaders shows that progress in writing is particularly strong for girls, and boys make a little better progress than girls in reading and mathematics. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving at a similarly impressive rate as other pupils. In lessons seen by the inspector, pupils made much better progress than during the last inspection and this positive improvement is confirmed by a scrutiny of pupils' books. Overall, significant improvement has been achieved to the quality of teaching and learning. The school and local authority monitoring records show that the proportion of inadequate lessons is reducing, while the proportion of good and outstanding lessons is increasing. During the inspection, no inadequate lessons were seen; the vast majority were satisfactory or good in equal measure and a smaller proportion was outstanding.

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

- Raise standards and achievement – outstanding

The effectiveness of provision

In all classes, teachers' lesson plans are greatly improved; they are clear, precise and focused firmly on the intentions for pupils' learning. Plans set out the expectations for pupils' learning taking full account of the range of prior learning by different groups of pupils. The classroom learning environment is much better in all cases. Each classroom is thoughtfully

displayed with a colourful range of pupils' work and a variety of captions which prompt and reinforce pupils' learning. The use of assessment is consistently better, though some variation remains. In particular, teachers' marking of pupils' work is mostly thorough, giving praise and indicating clear next steps to help pupils improve. Data are used well to inform the degree of challenge in lessons, which is much improved. Teachers are developing their skills in the techniques of ongoing assessment during lessons to ensure that learning is securely achieved. The curriculum timetable has been reviewed and action taken to correct the imbalance of time allocated to science lessons. The investigative aspects of science are much more prominent in the school's provision. Many more practical experiments are provided for pupils to learn through discovery and exploration. Pupils are clearer about what constitutes a fair test.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Improvements have been achieved in a wide range of areas of provision. The organisation of the children's learning environment, including the outdoors, is much better. Areas of learning are supported by bright, attractive displays and resources which children are increasingly able to access independently. In lessons, children are more on-task and enjoy the activities which are provided. Support for children's learning is improved with effective deployment of teaching assistants. Ongoing assessment and recording of teacher observations is improving. Each child now has a detailed profile of achievement with clear baseline assessments which enable leaders to measure children's progress in learning and personal development. Staff are increasingly knowledgeable about children's attainment and progress. Continuous provision is developing and children show increasing confidence in the boundaries and parameters of the classroom routines. The quality of teaching and learning as well as leadership and management is improving due to the significant impact of local authority support, the increasing involvement of the acting headteacher and the willingness of staff to embrace change. Much remains to be done to embed the significant improvements fully since the last inspection, but a good start has been made.

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

- Improve the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders at all levels are successfully bringing about significant improvement to the school's performance. However, leaders continue to rely on the considerable external support provided by the local authority and significant areas for improvement such as the Early Years Foundation Stage require more time to fully embed recent improvements. The acting headteacher is well supported by senior and middle leaders who share her ambition to address the issues facing the school rapidly. Since the last inspection, leaders have achieved improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, the rigour of data tracking to measure pupils' progress, the use of assessment, the balance of curriculum coverage and the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Additionally, the governing body is increasingly effective. The Chair provides clear direction to the governing body. He has

produced guidance and training materials for governors to improve their ability to support and challenge the school's leaders. The governing body, especially the action group, is well informed and knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision and performance. Training provided by the local authority has improved the governing body's skills in and understanding of the roles of governors.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve leadership and management at all levels – outstanding

External support

The local authority gives first-class support to the school. A range of consultants and advisers provide excellent guidance to develop improving provision in the school. The impact of this on the Early Years Foundation Stage is particularly impressive. The executive headteacher provides good mentoring support to the acting headteacher. The acting deputy headteacher is an outstanding classroom practitioner and this provides the school with an excellent role model on which to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The School Improvement Partner is perceptive and challenging to school leaders. A range of opportunities have been provided for staff to visit other schools which the local authority has identified as showing good and effective practice.