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1 April 2011

Mrs C Thomas
Acting Headteacher
Christ Church Pellon CE VC Primary School
Sandbeds Road
Pellon
Halifax
West Yorkshire
HX2 0QQ

Dear Mrs Thomas,

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

Following my visit to your school on 30 and 31 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 fourth 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

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and the Director of Children's Services for Calderdale.

Yours sincerely

Mr Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 28 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 fourth monitoring inspection from 30 to 31 March 2011

Evidence

The inspector visited 11 lessons. He scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, a local authority officer and the Chair of the IEB.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been some changes to the school's context. In February 2011 the headteacher commenced maternity leave. The school's former local authority School Improvement Partner is currently the acting headteacher. The learning mentor has left the school and an internal replacement appointed. In January the Chair of the Governing Body resigned and shortly afterwards an IEB was established. This is made up of five members and holds the powers and responsibilities for governance of the school. At the time of the inspection one teacher was absent from work due to ill-health.

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

The school's most recent assessments indicate that achievement continues to improve. Lesson observations and work scrutiny confirm that, although there are more pupils working at age-related expectations, there remain some pockets of low standards. In Year 2, although attainment has improved it is still generally below average; specifically the proportions reaching Level 2B and particularly in writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 has improved to be broadly average in reading, but in mathematics and writing this remains low. Within the current Year 6, although progress is improving, the group as a whole may not reach the agreed targets. The main reason for this is the number of pupils who have left or joined, and subsequently left the school since the targets were agreed. Tracking information is used well to identify pupils who need extra support or help with their learning. There is a wide range of interventions and support programmes in place. For example, support staff diligently take more groups of pupils to help them with their reading and writing skills, and a local authority consultant works with pupils to fill in gaps in their mathematical learning and skills. Although there has yet to be a formal evaluation of these interventions by the school, inspection evidence shows that they are having at least a satisfactory and sometimes good impact on pupils' learning and their progress. Staff in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage continue to improve their implementation of the letters and sounds programme. Some good teaching and learning was observed in this area of the school's work. However, there remains some variability in the delivery of this programme. The most-effective lessons engage all pupils, for example, in a Reception class lesson children were making words with the 'oo' sound and they successfully used magnetic letters to make words, such as book, look and took. Sometimes large group activities rely

solely on spoken activities and pupils become restless, which slows their learning. Opportunities for pupils to write at length continue to be planned on a weekly basis and scrutiny of work in Key Stage 2 shows that this is having a positive impact. Nevertheless, there remain some occasions when pupils do not complete pieces of written work. A clear success has been in improving the quality of handwriting and presentation across the school. The use of short, daily handwriting practice was seen to be effective; but there remain a small number of pupils who still form letters incorrectly.

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

- raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in both key stages – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Observations of lessons, break times and pupils moving around the school show that the behaviour of pupils continues to improve. In the vast majority of the lessons observed, behaviour was satisfactory and often good. However, there remain a small number of instances where pupils become off task and this adversely affects their learning. Additionally, there remains a small core of pupils who very occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour. Observations confirm that these instances are managed appropriately and, to their credit, other pupils are mostly not distracted and their learning continues unimpeded. Teachers and support staff have good relationships with pupils and largely manage behaviour well. On some occasions, however, opportunities are missed to acknowledge the many pupils who are behaving well. The behaviour management system continues to be well understood by pupils, who state categorically that behaviour is improving.

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

- improve pupils' behaviour – satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

The lessons that were observed show clearly that the quality of teaching continues to vary and not enough is of a consistently good quality to ensure that pupils make as much progress as they could. Nonetheless, there are clear signs that teaching continues to improve; no teaching was judged to be inadequate and more lessons were judged to be good than was previously the case. More teaching was judged to be securely satisfactory with good features. Lessons start promptly and are purposeful. Mostly clear learning objectives, in the form of 'I can' statements continue to be shared routinely with pupils. However, the delivery of some lessons lacks a clear focus and, consequently, tasks are unclear and time is not always used well. Additionally, the pace of learning sometimes slows where teachers are unsure of the precise sequence of learning that they expect in order to complete a piece of work, particularly in writing. Teachers are beginning to use their knowledge of pupils to set higher expectations and to tailor the work more precisely to the needs of pupils but this is not yet routine. The planned use of teaching assistants is generally effective, but on some occasions teachers do not plan the best use of their own time, for example, to work with pupils whom they know will find the task difficult or to

extend the learning of the most able. A clear success has been in improving the quality of marking and feedback provided to pupils, which now more consistently identifies for pupils how they should improve their work.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The local authority's support in securing the services of the school's former School Improvement Partner as acting headteacher during the headteacher's maternity leave has helped to ensure some continuity to the school and continued improvement. There is evidence of continued development of leadership and management at the deputy headteacher and inclusion manager level. For example, each is responsible for coordinating the work of both teachers and support staff within a key stage. The work of leaders and managers at other levels continues to develop, but for some remains at an early stage of development. The recently established IEB has met twice and has an experienced Chair in place. He has a clear view of the task ahead and is keen for rapid development of IEB members' skills. Already there is evidence of some increased and better focused questioning of the school's work. However, this development is new and too recent to show the long-term impact.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- develop effective delegation within the senior management – satisfactory

External support

Local authority support for the school has been good, securing the services of the acting headteacher and it has continued to provide staff training and ongoing support. The partnership with another local primary school continues to support the development of individual teachers.

Priorities for further improvement

- Further improve teaching so that more is consistently good or better, particularly by:
 - ensuring that pupils are routinely made aware of their teacher's expectation of work rate and quality
 - planning identifies the role and deployment of teachers within every lesson.