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Mrs J Minett
Acting Headteacher
Burton Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Minett

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

Following my visit with Elizabeth Strange, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10 and 11 May 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 – satisfactory

Newly Qualified Teachers can only be appointed to work in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 Diocese, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Dorset.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

■ Improve the quality of leadership and management by:

- sharpening evaluation, so that it sets a clear direction for improvement
- developing teamwork so that all staff share a common vision and ambition
- rigorously monitoring the work of the school to ensure that all teachers are implementing agreed actions for improvement.

■ Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that there is no inadequate teaching and over 60% is good by December 2011 through:

- making better use of assessment information to plan lessons that are challenging and well matched to the needs of all pupils
- improving the quality of marking and the use of targets to give better guidance and raise pupils' expectations of what they can achieve
- using the best teachers as role models to improve the consistency of teaching throughout the school.

■ Develop the curriculum by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects
- writing plans that show specific skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects so that pupils can build on these systematically and accelerate their progress.

Special measures: monitoring of Burton Church of England Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 May 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and the school's data, met with staff, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Fourteen part-lessons were observed. Lesson observations did not include Year 6, due to their end-of-key-stage tests. Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' workbooks, including those for Year 6.

Context

The school has an acting headteacher in post, seconded from another school in the county from January 2011 until the end of August 2011. A newly appointed headteacher is due to take up his post in September 2011. One member of staff has left the school and a new teacher has been appointed on a temporary contract. There are now 11 classes in the school and the deputy headteacher has resumed a class teaching role. The school no longer has an information and communication technology (ICT) suite.

Three new governors have been appointed and the former Vice-Chair has become the new Chair of the Governing Body.

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

The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage remains a strength of the school. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in lessons in the rest of the school. However, this is still insufficient for too many pupils given their starting points and the low levels of attainment in some year groups. In the last term, the most progress made in writing and mathematics has been in Year 2. Pupils in Year 1 made the most progress with their reading. During the same period of time, the least amount of progress has been in Years 5 and 6, where older pupils still have too many gaps in their learning. The legacy of underachievement has had a particularly negative impact on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because of the extent to which their basic skills in literacy and numeracy are underdeveloped. The use of targets to help pupils to know what to aim for is not consistent in all classes. Some pupils told inspectors that they would find it useful to know what their targets are; pupils in Year 5 would also like to know the levels at which they are working.

The school has developed a more secure and accurate way of tracking the progress made by pupils; however, this is not being used sufficiently well by all teachers to help accelerate learning. Nevertheless, teachers are better able to judge the level at

which pupils are working. Furthermore, changes made to learning are leading to pupils finding their lessons more enjoyable.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory in lessons and around the school, but can at times become overly boisterous. Staff's expectations about how well pupils should behave are not always high enough. Pupils told inspectors that they think behaviour in the school has improved. They appreciate the fact that expectations are clear and that undesirable behaviour will not go unpunished. However, the school's systems for recording incidents are not sufficiently thorough or detailed. As a result, it is not always clear what actions have been taken and by whom, and how successfully matters have been resolved. Nevertheless, since the arrival of the acting headteacher, this has already started to improve. The school is not currently providing enough ICT and this is further compromising the school's ability to prepare pupils adequately for the future. Pupils have noted an increase in the extent to which their spiritual awareness has recently been developed; however, their knowledge and appreciation of other cultures is very limited.

Levels of attendance are broadly average and the percentage of unauthorised absence is reducing, due to the school following up more rigorously on first days of absence.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation stage remains good. Although improving, the quality of teaching in the rest of the school remains largely satisfactory and only a minority is securely good or better. A small minority is inadequate. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and encouraging. Teachers are now working more closely together to ensure that pupils of the same age receive the same programmes of work. Other notable improvements to teaching include the use of more practical activities, cross-curricular links, and learning being put into a more meaningful context. The quality of lesson plans remains weak. These lack detail about what pupils are expected to learn, how pupils of differing abilities will be supported and/or extended and how their progress will be assessed. As a result, there is insufficient structured support for those who find learning difficult; there is not always enough challenge for the more able and there continue to be too many missed opportunities for pupils to use and develop their basic skills. Teachers do not all check regularly enough how well pupils are progressing during lessons. As a result, the pace of learning is at times too slow.

Teachers are beginning to mark work more regularly and are starting to use their assessment information to help them with their planning. However, this is not done consistently well through the school and too much of the marking remains merely cursory. There are now more planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop

their literacy skills in other subjects, but there are still too few opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy and ICT skills in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The school has started to write plans to improve the curriculum, but these are still too focused on activities rather than the knowledge, skills and understanding that need to be developed. Despite progress in improving programmes of work still being in the early stages of development, pupils are finding their lessons more interesting.

Teachers would welcome the opportunity to observe good practice in the school. Some have already benefited from the coaching, team teaching and additional training provided by the local authority. There remain, however, training implications for staff in terms of how they teach literacy and numeracy.

Judgement

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that there is no inadequate teaching and over 60% is good by December 2011- satisfactory
- Develop the curriculum - satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school has been very well led and managed by the acting headteacher, who was commissioned by the local authority to support the school. Regular leadership meetings now take place and the acting headteacher has modelled examples of effective leadership. As a result, some senior leaders have started to develop their roles. Monitoring and evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning and the progress made by pupils have taken place. Key Stage 1 have looked at the quality of pupils' work and some senior leaders have identified inconsistencies in the way teachers put the new assessment policy into practice. However, with the exception of the good leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage, significant shortcomings within the leadership and management remain. The drive for improving the rest of the school has come mainly from the acting headteacher. While there are now clear roles and responsibilities, too few of the substantive senior and middle leaders are contributing sufficiently to helping the school to accelerate the progress that needs to be made. Staff are clearly committed to the school and want to do their best for pupils. However, they have yet to build on their team spirit to ensure they all play their part in fully supporting and promoting an agreed vision for the school. Too few leaders and managers have developed action or improvement plans for their areas of responsibility or are contributing sufficiently to school self-evaluation and whole school improvement. There is not a clear sense of direction provided by all those with leadership responsibilities in their different areas of the school's work. As a result, there is a lack of clarity as to how the different parts of the school's work will dovetail together. This is slowing down the school's

efforts to begin to develop its capacity to sustain improvement without significant external support.

The governing body has been strengthened with the addition of new governors as well as by the changes that have been brought about following the restructuring of the roles and responsibilities of different committees. Consequently, the governing body is now holding the school more closely to account for the quality of teaching and the progress being made by pupils. There is also a closer working partnership between the school, its governing body and parents and carers. The acting headteacher and governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have devised an appropriate plan to priorities improvements. However, some key documents, such as the action plan for the governing body, do not include interim milestones against which progress can be measured at regular intervals.

Judgement

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management - satisfactory

External support

Dorset County's statement of action was judged to be fit for purpose. This has contributed to the good support provided to the school, including by the acting headteacher. Staff have welcomed and valued the support and guidance they have received to develop their practice and this has led to some of the improvements made to the quality of teaching and learning. The school has benefited from regular visits from county officers to monitor the progress it is making. However, notes of visits are at times more descriptive than evaluative. Although some accurate observations of progress are made, these focus mainly on provision and not enough on the impact of actions.