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10 June 2011

Mrs N Nelson
Headteacher
St Patrick's RC Primary School
Livesey Street
Collyhurst
Manchester
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Dear Mrs Nelson Latham

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Patrick's RC Primary School

Following my visit with Mrs Jennifer Lawrence, additional inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 June 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2009. 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

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Manchester and the Diocese of Salford.

Yours sincerely

Mr Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 13 October 2009

- In order to raise attainment and improve achievement across the school, the quality of teaching should be improved so that most lessons are good or better by:
 - providing opportunities for staff to develop their skills, share and learn from best practice in a variety of settings
 - ensuring that monitoring of the quality of lessons includes rigorous checking of the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - developing the use of assessment so that planning, questioning and work set are more closely matched to pupils' different levels of skill and ability
 - ensuring that any underperformance is quickly identified and challenged throughout the school, especially that of higher ability pupils and of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - making sure that all requirements for safeguarding are met
 - improving the rigour of the school's procedures for target-setting, analysis and tracking of the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils
 - developing and undertaking a programme of training for governors to improve their role in the strategic leadership of the school
 - increasing the involvement of leaders at all levels in monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.

Special measures: monitoring of St Patrick's RC Primary School

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection from 8 to 9 June 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, observed lessons and saw all of the class teachers who were working, scrutinised pupils' work books and the school's documents and met with the headteacher, an assistant headteacher, two subject leaders, pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and representatives of the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the IEB has continued to carry responsibility for the governance of the school. There are plans to return to a full governing body from September 2011. Two teachers have been absent due to sickness and their classes are taught by supply teachers. One of these teachers has resigned her post from August. One class continues to be taught by an acting temporary assistant headteacher. Two temporary teachers have been appointed to take up posts from September 2011; one is currently working at the school on a supply basis. A teaching assistant is absent from work because of sickness. A higher level teaching assistant has recently been recruited to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. An unqualified teacher has been recruited to teach French.

The school roll has continued to experience high levels of change with 19 pupils joining the school, including some who are at the early stages of learning English, and 17 pupils leaving since January 2011.

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

Attainment across the school remains low, particularly in mathematics. A notable success has been in securing some good progress and improved attainment for the pupils in Year 2, particularly in writing and mathematics. Another success has been to increase the proportions of pupils who have reached the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics. At Year 6, although rates of progress have continued to improve, pupils' attainment is below average. The senior staff are acutely aware of the fact that attainment in the current Years 4 and 5 continues to be below age-related expectations and it will be a challenge for these groups of pupils to reach average levels of attainment by the time they reach Year 6.

Current assessment data indicate that, across the school, rates of progress are continuing to improve, particularly in reading. Additionally there are more indications of individual successes. For example, one pupil learning English as an additional language has made particularly good progress in his reading and writing and is rapidly catching up to his peers. The instances of pupils who have not made the expected progress since the start of this

school year are reducing. The quality of assessment across the school continues to improve. Half-termly pupil progress review meetings are continuing to be used well to identify any pupils whose progress is slowing or who need extra help. This process continues to hold teachers to account. The use of targets continues to develop and all pupils have them, which is beginning to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

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

- Raise attainment and improve achievement across the school by ensuring that any underperformance is quickly identified and challenged throughout the school especially that of higher ability pupils and of pupils who speak English as an additional language – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The attendance rate continues to improve but remains well below average. Strategies to monitor attendance and to reward good or improved attendance are being rigorously implemented. A particular issue for the school relates to the attendance of some traveller pupils and some pupils who take extended visits abroad. The senior leaders and managers are aware of the need to reduce rates of persistent absenteeism further and to improve the punctuality of some pupils.

The introduction of a school council, with representatives from every class, is a positive development. Pupils said that they value the fact that lunchtimes have been improved, meaning that there are always clubs and supervised sports activities. In addition, they appreciate that they have been consulted on the types of clubs and activities they would like.

The effectiveness of provision

Although the quality of teaching has been adversely affected by recent staffing difficulties there is evidence of some continued improvements. This is particularly evident for some individual teachers whose practice has improved because of the support and challenge provided by senior leaders and managers. No inadequate lessons were seen, an increased proportion was judged to be good or had good features and some teaching was judged to be outstanding. Although teaching is continuing to improve, the significant staffing difficulties mean that some recent developments have not become embedded. For example, the use of the agreed lesson planning format and the use of assessment to ensure just the right amount of challenge for all pupils within a class are not evident in all lessons. Consequently, there is not enough consistency in the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress. Relationships continue to be a strength and clear rules ensure that classrooms are calm and orderly. Behaviour is mostly good and pupils say they enjoy their lessons. However, there are some pupils, particularly boys, who are demanding of the adults' time. This is mostly managed well by both class teachers and

caring teaching assistants. However, there are times when this means that some pupils, particularly girls, receive less adult attention.

Planning is clear and identifies individual and group learning objectives; adult support is well targeted. The pace of learning within lessons continues to improve so that children maintain their levels of interest and concentration. Timely interventions by class teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils are well supported and directed to improve their work. In the best lessons the use of assessment information or teachers' knowledge of pupils is used exceptionally well to modify questions that add just the right amount of challenge to pupils of all abilities. Similarly, in these lessons work is set at just the right level to challenge and extend the learning of all groups of pupils. However, in other lessons, although planning clearly identifies how work is to be modified for at least three ability levels, some tasks do not always extend and challenge all groups of children. All class teachers identify all of the different groups of pupils on their planning and this is ensuring that greater attention is being paid to the needs of those pupils who speak English as an additional language or are at the very early stages of learning English. Consequently, interesting learning activities are being planned which interest and capture the imagination of all pupils. For example, Year 1 pupils were captivated when one pupil took on the role of a book character. The use of partner talk is continuing to develop and good attention is paid to pairings so that less-confident speakers are learning from their partners. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), which was previously a concern, has improved.

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage clear systems and procedures ensure that the children have access to a range of interesting learning activities indoors and outside. Assessment information is being used effectively to plan activities. Some adults extend children's learning well by asking such questions, 'Where do you think...' and 'Why...'. As a result, children's replies and their language skills are improved. However, there remain inconsistencies in the way children's learning is extended and opportunities are missed to maximise learning in a meaningful way.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that most lessons are good or better by developing the use of assessment so that planning, questioning and work set are more closely matched to pupils' different levels of skills and ability – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Despite staffing difficulties, on a day-to-day basis the school runs smoothly, pupils are well supervised and developments have continued to improve the quality of provision. Nevertheless, the discontinuity of staffing, particularly within Key Stage 2, represents a potential barrier to the school's successful exit from special measures. There are sound plans in place for staffing the school from September and the senior leaders and managers are realistic about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. They have, for example, correctly identified the need to ensure that all new teachers are quickly brought up to speed

with the school's systems for assessing pupils, planning lessons, using clear learning objectives and marking. Strong leadership continues to be provided by the headteacher and assistant headteacher. Key successes include: improving school routines and the use of support staff to implement interventions, such as direct phonics teaching; improvements to lunchtime; and the introduction of the school council. The role of subject leader has been clarified and some individual teachers have benefitted from bespoke training along with clear guidance from the headteacher. As a consequence, they have begun to develop their role in both judging and influencing provision and outcomes for pupils. However, there remains much to be done to ensure that all teachers are fulfilling their roles effectively. Safeguarding remains a high priority for the school and its staff. The single central record of recruitment and vetting checks is fully up to date. Partnerships with key members of the parish are continuing to improve.

The IEB continues to meet regularly but attendance by some members is inconsistent. Although there are clear plans and timescales in place for the transfer of responsibilities from the IEB to a new governing body in September 2011, transitional arrangements are underdeveloped. Much work will need to be done if the new governing body is to become effective at both challenging and supporting the work of the school.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Strengthen leadership and management – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority continues to support the work of the school and the IEB satisfactorily. Its officers are aware of the need for the new governing body to become effective from its inception. Support from the partner school continues to be useful. For example, during this visit an experienced teacher from the partner school was observed demonstrating good practice to a newly qualified teacher.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that staffing is more stable.
- Accelerate the transition arrangements for transferring responsibilities from the IEB to a fully constituted governing body.
- Continue to embed recent developments to improve the quality of teaching and to raise attainment and improve progress further.