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Mrs Alison Nettleship
Headteacher
Weston Mill Community Primary School
Ferndale Road
Plymouth
Devon
PL2 2EL

Dear Mrs Nettleship

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Weston Mill Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 and 15 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures, following the inspection which took place in September 2010. 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may not 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 Plymouth.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- In order to raise attainment and accelerate progress, improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that assessment information is used consistently to plan lessons at the appropriate level for pupils' ages and abilities.

- Develop the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - ensuring all staff with leadership roles have the skills to carry them out and fully understand their accountabilities
 - ensuring assessment information is accurate and used more rigorously to track the progress of all groups of pupils from their starting points and to set challenging targets
 - rigorously monitoring and driving improvement in the quality of teaching.

Special measures: monitoring of Weston Mill Community Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 14–15 June 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other staff, two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, the principal adviser from the local authority, a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 and the parent support adviser who, until recently, was the parent champion.

Context

The deputy headteacher is leaving to take up a headship in September 2011. A new deputy will then join the school and a play leader for lunch and play times will also take up her post. Currently there is an acting team leader for Years 5 and 6 staff due to illness. The school's planned admission number will increase to 60 from September and building work is to take place over the summer holiday to provide additional and refurbished accommodation.

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

The school is becoming increasingly successful in accelerating pupils' progress. Its data, supported by inspection evidence, indicate that the results of the Year 6 tests in English and mathematics this summer are likely to show a significant improvement on those achieved in 2010. Progress made by Year 6 pupils has accelerated markedly in both subjects in recent months as a result of better teaching that is sharply focused on addressing pupils' weaknesses. Although attainment in mathematics is on track to be below that in English, some significant ground has been made up and important gaps in pupils' learning in mathematics have been addressed. Progress is improving in the rest of the school, particularly in Year 5, although progress in mathematics remains slower than in English. Boys make slower progress than girls, although there is evidence that the gap is starting to narrow in writing and in mathematics. Attainment in Year 2 is on track to be better than in 2010, although standards remain below average.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the areas for improvement.

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour observed in classrooms and around the school was good and pupils concentrated on their work well. The school continues to be a calm and orderly community. Pupils interviewed reported that 'all the teachers put really hard work in

to make our lessons fun'. They were confident that they knew their targets in English and mathematics and what they needed to do to reach them.

The effectiveness of provision

Efforts to improve the quality of teaching have been sustained well. Systematic lesson observations have continued, led by the headteacher and senior staff and, now increasingly, involving the subject leaders for English and mathematics. Observations result in clear feedback on strengths and areas for development that are followed up on subsequent occasions as appropriate. Focused support for individuals has been provided by the advanced skills teacher when needed. Local authority consultants and advisers have provided useful support, for example in phonics for Key Stage 1 staff and in the scrutiny of pupils' work in English. Actions taken are bearing increasing fruit in lessons and data gathered by the school and the local authority indicate that teaching is improving. Some good teaching was observed with well-planned activities which built effectively on previous learning and provided good challenge for the pupils. Teachers showed increasing skills in checking pupils' learning and adjusting groupings to meet pupils' needs more effectively.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher continues to demonstrate a firm commitment to rapid improvement and this is widely shared by the staff. The improvement plan underpins efforts to improve the school and is now a document to which middle leaders are making increasingly significant contributions. The role of the English and mathematics subject leaders has continued to strengthen and these staff now scrutinise pupils' work and teachers' planning with increasing rigour, providing individual feedback for staff. These subject leaders are now involved in observing teaching and learning in the classrooms and work effectively together, adopting similar approaches in carrying out their roles. The teams of teachers meet weekly and make a useful contribution to discussing the progress of individual pupils and checking planning.

The development of the governing body has continued. The Chair of the Governing Body is starting to attend senior leadership meetings and staff are now reporting to the governing body about particular subjects or aspects of the school. Governors' visits to the school are more structured and link governors are shortly to present reports to the governing body on their areas or subjects. The data used to track pupils' progress are now well established and used effectively to check the progress of individuals and of different groups. Teachers' assessments are increasingly accurate as a result of careful consideration of examples of pupils' work, both in

teams and as a whole staff. A local authority consultant is to visit soon to support such activity in relation to writing across the school.

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

- Develop the effectiveness of leadership – good.

External support

The local authority's support for the school is good and tailored well to its needs. This has included specific support from individual consultants and advisers, funding for the further training of middle leaders and a recent detailed review of teaching and learning in mathematics. Now that the school is making good progress, less frequent meeting of the school review group is sensibly under consideration for the future.