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Mr S Dent
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
Whitehouse Road
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Dear Mr Dent

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

Following my visit to your school on 5 and 6 July 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 September 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

The school can appoint one Newly Qualified Teacher.

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 Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2009

- Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - raising pupils' attainment and improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who exceed their age related levels in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the majority of teaching is good or better and, as a matter of urgency, ensuring that all inadequate teaching is eliminated
 - ensuring that all teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and the small steps which build on pupils' levels of skills and knowledge, are planned carefully
 - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of the more able pupils and their work is carefully matched to their capabilities so that they receive sufficient challenge
 - improving the quality of the academic guidance given to pupils.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the work of the school more rigorously to: identify clearly the priorities for improvement; set challenging targets; monitor the progress made by all groups of pupils and hold staff to account for pupils' progress.

- Ensure that the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets statutory requirements.

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

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on 5-6 July 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

There have been no changes in context since the last inspection visit.

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

Since the last visit, there is evidence of improved attainment at the end of Year 6. Assessment, including provisional national 2011 test results, indicates improved outcomes, especially in mathematics and reading. Attainment in English has improved less because of weaker performance in writing. More pupils have attained Level 5 in English and mathematics. These outcomes are the result of the better progress pupils are making, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The progress pupils make across the school is uneven. From below average starting points, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have progressed well so that they will be entering Year 1 in September 2011 with skills that are average. The national assessments and the end of Year 2 indicate that there has been a rise in attainment in all areas, other than writing. Older pupils were observed to be working particularly hard when undertaking challenging work on Shakespeare. Younger children responded enthusiastically when investigating how to make pirate ships float. Elsewhere, the pace of learning is less impressive largely because opportunities are missed to promote high levels of engagement.

Pupils' reading continues to improve because there is a greater focus on this aspect in lessons. More effective use of teaching assistants outside normal lesson time and the embedding of intervention programmes are enabling pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make improved progress. More able pupils are making better progress as a result of the greater challenge they are experiencing in lessons.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Raise pupils' achievement by raising pupils' attainment and improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2 and for more able pupils – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Where pupils are progressing well their behaviour is good but pupils identified less challenging lessons where occasional low-level disruption occurred. Pupils value their school council because of the good work it does in improving the school environment and in raising funds for charity. Pupils have relatively few opportunities to give their views about the quality of learning and how this can be improved.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching and the use of assessment have improved further. Pupils undertake more activities that are appropriate to their abilities, especially in mathematics and English. Expectations have risen for all pupils. For instance in a highly effective English lesson all pupils were able to engage effectively with 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' because of the range of carefully designed tasks. Pupils' motivation in this task was further enhanced because they will shortly be performing the play to an audience of parents and carers and other pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children were observed to be making good progress because of highly effective learning reviews. For instance, children enjoyed signing to indicate they had achieved the success criteria associated with subtraction and addition.

There has been progress in ensuring teachers are aware of the small steps pupils must take to attain their targets. More classrooms contain examples of work at different levels. The more effective teachers do not miss opportunities to use examples they see in lessons to further reinforce pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve. More child-friendly statements to help pupils judge how well they understand the learning in lessons also reinforce their knowledge of how to improve. The pace of learning was observed to accelerate where teachers set timed targets and introduce an element of competition. Where best practice was seen, teachers did not limit reviews to the end of lessons but used these to motivate pupils in their learning and to identify examples that clarify how pupils can excel. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to use pupils' work to highlight practice from which others could learn and to model effective approaches to assessment. Occasionally, it is still the case that teachers' lesson introductions are overly long and prevent teaching assistants from effectively supporting pupils.

Teachers are asking more questions that require pupils to think at a higher level. However, a minority of teachers continue to rely too heavily on willing volunteers when they pose questions to the class. Lessons were observed in which the progress of some pupils was restricted because they could not make choices – for instance, through omitting questions so pupils could concentrate on those that were more challenging. Self and peer assessment is now used much more frequently. This activity is particularly helpful when it is linked to assessment criteria derived from the National Curriculum. Where this was not the case, the improvements identified were

often relatively superficial. Although the subjects of the curriculum are contributing more to pupils' progress, the links with pupils' individual literacy and numeracy targets are not always made.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that the majority of teaching is good or better and, as a matter of urgency, ensuring that all inadequate teaching is eliminated – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management continue to improve. All senior leaders are taking greater responsibility for school improvement. For instance, the acting deputy headteacher has accurately pinpointed weakness in teaching and is organising support to address this. The link with a Nottingham school is a positive development because it is enthusing staff and has contributed to a clearer vision of how assessment practice can be made more effective. The involvement of all leaders in the self-review process is becoming more embedded. Members of the governing body are capable and have astute insights into the school. They recognise that they can have a greater influence on future development by making their requirements more apparent to school leaders. Although the Early Years Foundation Stage met the statutory requirement some time ago, the leadership of this phase has continued to seek further improvement. For instance, there is now a focus on improving the effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers.

Despite these improvements, inconsistency remains because the monitoring of teaching and learning is not fully effective in ensuring all staff adhere to the school's teaching and learning policy. Important improvements have been made to the reliability of the data used to inform progress reviews. However, these reviews do not always have sufficiently strong links to the insights gained from the monitoring of lessons. Nevertheless, the improved progress made, particularly by the youngest and oldest learners, is evidence that the school is increasing its capacity for sustained improvement.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the work of the school more rigorously and ensure that the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets statutory requirements – satisfactory.

External support

The Education Improvement Adviser continues to provide the right level of challenge and support that allows the school to demonstrate the extent it is developing its capacity for sustained improvement. The local authority has been instrumental in supporting the development of partnerships with other schools that are beneficial to the school.