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Friday 08 July 2011

Ms C McLachlan
Headteacher
St Peter's Church of England Primary School
Whitefield Road
Bury
Lancashire
BL9 9PW

Dear Ms McLachlan,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on the 6 and 7 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 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 - 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bury.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 24 May 2010

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science by:
 - improving the quality of teaching so that it is at least good
 - ensuring that pupils' key skills are developed consistently and systematically through a wide range of curriculum subjects
 - using assessment information to carefully plan and implement the precise next steps in pupils' learning.

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and impacts on improving outcomes for pupils
 - making better use of information on pupils' progress to set challenging targets and expectations for individuals or groups
 - ensuring that all teachers are held accountable for the progress made by pupils in their classes.

- Ensure that safeguarding systems and procedures are robust and regularly maintained and updated.

- Improve the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of recent changes in provision
 - ensuring consistently good teaching and learning across the Nursery and Reception classes
 - monitoring children's progress closely so that underachievement is addressed promptly.

- Raise pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.

Special measures: monitoring of St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection from 06 Jul 2011 to 07 Jul 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and held meetings with staff, pupils, and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, there have been some staff changes. One teacher has left and one has embarked on a phased return following a prolonged absence. A new teacher took up a temporary appointment at the start of term and is teaching the Year 1 class until the end of this school year. This teacher has taken on the role of special educational needs coordinator. Two of the three teachers appointed to join the school in September 2011 have begun work at St Peter's this term. One has taken on the Year 4 class full-time and the other is working in a relief capacity, mainly covering absence. A specialist leader in education has begun working with the school to support improvement.

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

In the main, pupils' progress has improved and in many of the lessons observed they made good gains in learning. However, the school's records show that progress remains uneven across the school. In some classes, pupils have not progressed rapidly enough either to overcome previous underachievement fully or to reach the standards expected by the time they leave the school. For many, attainment in writing still lags behind reading and, to a lesser extent, mathematics.

End of year results for 2011 were available at this visit. They give a mixed picture. Taken overall, the attainment of the current Year 6 pupils was broadly similar to that seen last year. It fell short of the school's challenging targets and did not reach the level seen nationally in recent years. However, more than a quarter of the year group joined the school during Key Stage 2. Those who had spent longer at the school generally did better. In English, fewer pupils than last year reached the level of attainment expected for their age. Attainment in writing was considerably lower than in reading. The results in mathematics were very similar to last year's but the pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 was not as good as in English. On the whole, boys made less progress than girls.

Children approaching the end of the Reception Year have made better progress but their attainment is lower than average. There are considerable disparities in their attainment between areas of learning. They have done best in learning to link letters and sounds and, in early mathematics, learning about shape, space and measures.

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

- raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory
- improve the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The attendance rate has improved since September 2010 but is not yet up to the national average. The school has tackled instances of persistent absence robustly and it continues to reward good attendance. Data for the current term show a good improvement on the same period last year.

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

- raise pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average - satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

Many of the lessons seen were taught well, more than at the previous monitoring inspection. Teachers generally pitched work at a suitable level for the age of the pupils and adjusted activities according to pupils' capabilities. Throughout the school, lessons were orderly and relationships between staff and pupils were positive. The senior staff know, however, that the quality of some teaching still slips to inadequate.

The strengths of the more effective teaching included:

- lesson content that appealed to pupils and captured their interest
- pacy lessons with several short activities which kept pupils on their toes
- clear and high expectations of effort, independence and attitudes to learning
- good teamwork between teachers and other staff
- well-considered opportunities for pupils to evaluation of their own learning enhancing their commitment to achievement.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is considerably stronger in the Reception class than in the Nursery.

In lessons where learning was less than good, it was primarily because of a slower pace. This meant that too many pupils did not need to attend closely so their attention drifted. At times teachers talked too much and did not give pupils time to explain their thinking or to do their work. Equally, when quicker learners completed work in less than the allotted time, there was nothing more for them to do.

The accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment has improved so term-by-term data can now be used more confidently to check on pupils' progress.

Much has been done to improve the planning of the curriculum for the full range of subjects and a clear whole-school overview is secure. However, the quality of teachers' more detailed

planning for each half term, including opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills, varies considerably.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The role of staff who have responsibility for leading work in English and mathematics is developing well. For example, they are using assessment data effectively to identify priorities for development and are taking more of a leading role in meetings to discuss pupils' progress with the class teachers. For several subjects, however, whilst leaders have been identified for next term, there is presently a hiatus.

The capacity and effectiveness of the governing body has improved well. Members of the governing body have benefitted from training as well as guidance from the additional, temporary members of the governing body. They have an enhanced understanding of their role. They are better informed about the school's performance and have raised pertinent questions about it. Links between the governing body and staff are strengthening.

Checks on new staff have been undertaken promptly, meeting the requirements for safeguarding pupils.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- increase the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance – good
- ensure that safeguarding systems and procedures are robust and regularly maintained and updated – satisfactory

External support

The local authority has continued to provide helpful support for staff and the governing body and to monitor the school's progress regularly. It has an accurate view of the school's progress and its priorities for further improvement. It has provided funds to enable newly appointed teachers to start working in the school earlier than anticipated. Residual funds from the City Challenge for Greater Manchester provide the specialist leader in education.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that pupils make more consistently rapid progress as they move up the school, in order to improve attainment by Year 6.
- As new staff join the school, ensure that strong teamwork enables the pace of improvement to be kept up.
- Strengthen leadership and management and curricular planning in the non-core subjects of the National Curriculum.