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29 September 2011

Miss L Hoyle
Acting Headteacher
Luddenden Dene CE (VC) Junior Infant and Nursery School
Dene View
Luddendenfoot
Halifax
West Yorkshire
HX2 6PB

Dear Miss Hoyle,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Luddenden Dene CE (VC) Junior Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 September 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 April 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

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 Calderdale.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 15 and 16 April 2010

- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures are applied rigorously at all times.

- Improve the overall quality of teaching so that pupils' progress accelerates by:
 - planning work that is suitably matched to pupils' differing ability levels
 - ensuring that all pupils are fully aware of what they are expected to learn by the end of a lesson
 - making the best use of available time and resources so that pupils stay motivated and engaged throughout the lesson
 - eradicating inadequate teaching.

- Review and adapt the curriculum so that it allows staff to plan for the progressive development of pupils' skills.

- Ensure leaders, manager and the governing body monitor all aspects of the school's provision rigorously in order to produce:
 - accurate self-evaluation
 - sharply focused improvement planning.

- Accelerate children's progress in the Early Year's Foundation Stage, by:
 - improving the use of assessment information so that children's progress can be accurately tracked
 - using this information to plan more precisely the next steps in their learning
 - ensuring that the outdoor area in the Nursery provides a high quality environment for learning.

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Luddenden Dene CE (VC) Junior Infant and Nursery School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 27 and 28 September 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed teaching and learning in each of the five classes in the school and also visited the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. He scrutinised school documents and reports and reviewed a sample of pupils' work. Discussions took place with school leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the School Effectiveness Officer.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, the school has employed three new staff to fill the vacant posts that existed. A Key Stage 2 teacher has resigned. A School Effectiveness Officer has replaced the School Improvement Partner. The deputy headteacher has assumed the role of special educational needs coordinator as the post holder is on maternity leave.

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

Generally, pupils continue to make improved progress and are narrowing the gaps that remain between their attainment and age-related expectations, but there remain areas of concern. The 2011 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile shows that children in the Reception class progressed effectively and outcomes in each of the areas of learning rose for the third year running. Children made particularly rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The 2011 national test results for Year 2 buck the declining trend of the past two years for the proportion of pupils matching age-related expectations. Also, more pupils gained the higher levels in writing and mathematics. The 2011 test results for Year 6 were not as strong as the 2010 results. In particular, the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations in both English and mathematics was lower than predicted. Pupils made fast progress over the past year but this was not enough to compensate for earlier underachievement. Elsewhere in the school, progress data and other evidence indicate faster progress for most pupils, including the most able. Remaining issues are mostly with mathematics and writing in Key Stage 2 and for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 – satisfactory
- accelerate children's progress in the Early Year's Foundation Stage – good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour in the playground was not a cause for concern during this monitoring inspection, although some pupils' boisterous behaviour in lessons was not challenged.

The effectiveness of provision

Overall, staff continue to respond well to the support, challenge and guidance they are receiving to help them improve the effectiveness of their practice. A series of joint-lesson observations with the headteacher indicated that agreed protocols for planning, assessment and feedback to pupils are more embedded. This is helping to ensure that pupils know what is expected of them, how well they are doing, and what they can do to improve further. In the more effective lessons observed teaching was dynamic, highly-focused and challenging. Pupils relished this and responded with high levels of enthusiasm and concentration. As a result teaching had a meaningful impact and learning was active, effective and progressively independent. Teaching assistants continue to be well-deployed and are increasing their impact by utilising skills developed from additional training. Some teaching observed was inadequate. In these lessons, pupils' learning and progress was inhibited by: insufficiently demanding activities; confusion over the specific lesson activities and objectives; boisterous behaviour; and a lack of pace, fluency and coherence between parts of the lesson.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage continue to benefit from a diverse range of well-conceived, highly engaging and edifying teacher-led and independent learning activities which build on and extend their current skills and dispositions. Work to: sharpen assessment and planning; mirror the quality of indoor learning outdoors; strengthen links with parents and carers; integrate new staff; and build on strengths in teaching and learning has been effective.

As the school's curriculum becomes more embedded, it is enhancing and extending pupils' learning experiences. Work to: improve the learning environment; consolidate links between discrete aspects of work or subjects; increase the volume of visits and visitors; and the variety of extra-curricular activities available are bearing fruit. Staff are now more familiar with these arrangements and better placed to systematically plan for the progressive development of key skills for pupils. The implementation of new policy to give staff greater ownership in precisely identifying, monitoring and evaluating pupil progress, a fresh approach to teaching the links between letters and sounds, and the home learning agreement are cementing the gains achieved so far. Pupils are enjoying the wider offer open to them. Recently this has included boxing, a visit from paramedics, and exploring ancient Egyptian culture, incorporating science, mathematics, design and technology, history and geography.

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

- improve the effectiveness of teaching - satisfactory
- review and adapt the curriculum so that it allows staff to plan for the progressive development of pupils' skills – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher and her new deputy headteacher have gelled well and are working purposefully to: further embed key improvement strategies; rigorously monitor and evaluate the school's progress against issues from the previous section 5 inspection; support staff development; and hold staff to account for the quality and impact of their work.

Performance data indicate that largely their strategy is having a positive impact, not only in improving the quality of provision and accelerating pupils' achievement but also in enhancing the school's atmosphere and ethos. Whilst the school is not yet in a position to improve fast enough in all areas without external support, there are more signs of sustained improvement and solid foundations in several aspects of the school's work. There is work to do in ensuring that all the new staff settle in effectively.

Members of the governing body have entered into a time-limited partnership with governors from the acting headteacher's school to explore ways of resolving the future leadership of both schools. Through their standards and effectiveness committee they are closely monitoring, challenging and supporting the school to tackle key issues. They are also fulfilling a 'gate keeper' role by quality assuring compliance with safeguarding regulations. A corporate compliance log has been established and is routinely scrutinised and updated.

This monitoring inspection included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found that they meet current requirements.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- ensure that all safeguarding procedures are applied rigorously at all times – satisfactory
- ensure leaders, managers and the governing body monitor all aspects of the school's provision rigorously in order to produce accurate self-evaluation and sharply focused improvement planning – good

External support

The local authority continues to provide a range of advice, support and challenge to assist the school on their journey out of special measures which the school acknowledge remains necessary, albeit to a lesser extent than previously.