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8 December 2011

Mr Jones
Interim headteacher
St Paul with St Luke Church of England Primary School
Leopold Street
Bow
London
E3 4LA

Dear Mr Jones

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Paul with St Luke Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 and 7 December, 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 November 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 made subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

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, the Diocesan Board and the Director of Children's Services for Tower Hamlets.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - setting more challenging targets that require pupils to make at least satisfactory progress
 - improve staff deployment to enable the best teachers to make a more direct impact on learning
 - improve monitoring activity to ensure that points are identified and followed up promptly
 - improve the effectiveness of the governing body's monitoring of the school's work
 - meeting the requirements for community cohesion in order to support pupils' contribution to the community and their social and cultural development.

- Improve teaching so that pupils' progress is consistently good throughout the school, especially in writing, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sufficiently ambitious
 - ensuring that lessons engage and challenge all pupils and meet pupils' differing needs and abilities
 - improve the quality and consistency of marking to have a better impact on pupils' learning and showing pupils how to make improvement.

- Improve attendance so that it is average by the end of July 2011.

Special measures: monitoring of St Paul with St Luke

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 December 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.

Context

In September 2011 the school appointed an interim headteacher to cover the long-term absence of the headteacher owing to illness. Over the last term, seven new class teachers have taken up posts in the school.

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

The school's latest test results confirm that attainment at Key Stage 2 in both English and mathematics is rising but that attainment overall remains below average. At Key Stage 1, writing results have been comparatively lower than other subjects and significantly below the national average. In 2011, girls' attainment in Year 2 was significantly lower in reading and writing than found nationally. The school's most recent assessment information for all year groups indicates that pupils' rates of progress are increasing. Inspection evidence found that pupils were making good progress in an increasing proportion of lessons. However, teaching is not yet consistently good across the school to alleviate pupils' previous underperformance.

Younger pupils in Year 1 and 2 make more rapid progress in developing their early reading through a more consistent and systematic approach. Improvement in the organisation and arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has ensured that they are provided with appropriate support that meets their needs and helps them to learn well. Specialist speech and language support helps children to develop their expressive language skills and their self-confidence. Lower-ability pupils in Year 6 now make good progress because they are provided with specific daily support in English and mathematics that is well matched to their needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make better progress during good quality focused activities led by teaching staff. At other times, the learning environment enables teachers to organise a range of activities that satisfactorily develop their learning across a range of areas.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils are positive about the new arrangements at lunchtimes, when they enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities on offer. They report that new initiatives are helping to encourage better behaviour and positive attitudes. The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution and are developing their cultural understanding was not a focus of this monitoring visit.

Pupils proudly received 'Pupil of the week' awards during assembly time and their self-confidence is raised further as other pupils responded warmly with applause. Assemblies and the school day conclude with well-observed prayers and opportunities for spiritual reflection. Pupils are confident in their knowledge of individual targets in mathematics and English and can identify what they have to do to improve in these subjects. Pupils reported that teachers' marking is helping them to improve their work.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching and assessment across the school continues to develop. While not yet consistently found across the school, there was a higher proportion of good teaching during this monitoring visit than previously. New teaching staff have settled quickly to adopt the school's policies and procedures. Teachers confidently use a range of techniques to maintain the pace of learning and to engage pupils. Pupils are frequently encouraged to share their ideas and develop their learning in short, focused discussions. Clear and consistently applied behaviour management strategies, combined with good relationships between staff and pupils, ensure that pupils regularly apply themselves to their work. Lesson planning consistently details different tasks and activities for pupils of different abilities within a single class. Local authority consultants are continuing to provide effective support for new teachers with their planning. However, the extent of this support has rightly reduced over the course of the term as teachers have become increasingly confident in planning for mixed-ability classes.

Teaching assistants provide support which is increasingly well matched to the needs of individual pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and are able to assess and report on pupils' progress. This is because class teachers are more consistently sharing their detailed planning to ensure staff understand the purpose of the activity and are consequently more able to provide appropriate support and guidance. Staff across the school are identifying the features of good writing, and where these are recorded clearly and presented in their books, pupils are more able to evaluate their own writing and to identify ways to improve it. In all lessons, teachers identify and share their learning intentions with pupils and explain what a good piece of work will look like. These strategies are used more effectively to increase pupils' rates of progress when they are based on careful assessments of pupils' previous learning and adapted precisely to pupils' needs.

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

- Improve teaching so that pupils' progress is consistently good throughout the school, especially in writing – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new interim headteacher has quickly brought stability and a sense of direction to the school. He has established a number of systems to ensure that revised routines and procedures are understood and consistently applied across the school. Senior leaders are providing appropriate monitoring and support for teachers, who respond well to advice and guidance. Leaders have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of individual members of staff and have reacted swiftly to improve specific areas of weakness in teaching. School support staff have maintained their vigilant approach to monitoring attendance and this has resulted in a clear increase in attendance rates this term. Newly appointed middle leaders have developed action plans; the literacy coordinator has worked effectively with the local authority to develop a more consistent and systematic approach to teaching early reading skills.

Senior leaders have improved the arrangements to provide support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and continue to assess the needs of pupils who are making less-than-expected rates of progress. Specific sessions are provided for pupils to develop their language and communication skills. The new special educational needs coordinator, with the advice and support of a suitably qualified governor, has worked quickly to ensure pupils' individual education plans are up to date. These plans clearly identify strategies to develop pupils' reading, emotional and social skills, although currently they do not consistently include specific targets to develop pupils' writing skills.

The Chair of the Governing Body is wholeheartedly committed to improving the school and her weekly meetings have provided strong support and consistency during changes in leadership. Members of the governing body and in particular the school improvement committee are providing more robust challenge to senior leaders during meetings. Governors and school leaders hold regular consultations with parents and carers to keep them informed of the school's progress and recent developments. Governors regularly evaluate the school's progress against a comprehensive action plan. This has led to improvements across a broad range of areas but does not currently provide a sufficient focus on developing the key priority areas of pupils' writing and on improving the progression of lower-attaining pupils. Issues relating to the school's promotion of community cohesion were not a focus of this monitoring visit.

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

- Improve leadership and management – good.

- Improve attendance so that it is average by the end of July 2011 – good.

External support

The local authority continues to provide strong support for the school in terms of financial resources and professional consultants. The senior school improvement officer and other local authority representatives closely monitor the school's progress. They regularly review and adapt levels of support and have begun to decrease support as the school improves. For example, as teachers become increasingly confident in their lesson planning, the local authority has decreased the time spent by consultants supporting this aspect of the school's work. Local authority consultants have worked alongside senior staff to monitor teaching and learning and have confirmed the accuracy of senior leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning.