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Mr Dean Buckland
Headteacher
Burton Church of England Primary School
Campbell Road
Christchurch
BH23 7JY

Dear Mr Buckland

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Burton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 7 and 8 February 2012, 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 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may 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 Diocese, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Dorset.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening evaluation, so that it sets a clear direction for improvement
 - developing teamwork so that all staff share a common vision and ambition
 - rigorously monitoring the work of the school to ensure that all teachers are implementing agreed actions for improvement.

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that there is no inadequate teaching and over 60% is good by December 2011 through:
 - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons that are challenging and well matched to the needs of all pupils
 - improving the quality of marking and the use of targets to give better guidance and raise pupils' expectations of what they can achieve
 - using the best teachers as role models to improve the consistency of teaching throughout the school.

- Develop the curriculum by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects
 - writing plans that show specific skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects so that pupils can build on these systematically and accelerate their progress.

Special measures: monitoring of Burton Church of England Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 7–8 February 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, teaching and support staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a newly appointed governor as well as a group of parents and some pupils. Ten part-lessons were observed; seven of the observations were done alongside the headteacher. The inspector looked at reports from the local authority, the governing body minutes, the school's documentation and practice related to the safeguarding of children. The school's data about pupils' progress was also taken into account.

Context

The former deputy headteacher, as well as another member of the senior leadership team, left the school in December 2011. The school has appointed a new deputy headteacher due to take up her position in the summer term 2012. Two additional teachers have been appointed on temporary contracts. Four members of the governing body have left the school and two new governors have been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are progressing well. They are currently making particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as well as in learning to link letters and sounds. More-able children are already learning to recognise double letter sounds such as 'ee' in the word 'bee'.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. They are rising more rapidly in Year 2 and Year 6 and, more significantly, in reading and writing than in mathematics. Most pupils in these key stages are making accelerated progress in reading. However, this is not always the case for a minority of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is because pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) is not secure for those pupils who are still learning to read, including at Key Stage 2. Pupils are rarely encouraged to think about, use and develop their phonics skills beyond the dedicated phonics sessions. Most pupils are improving the progress they are making in developing their writing skills and are learning to use adjectives, adverbs, similes and metaphors for descriptive writing. However, there are not always enough opportunities for all of the pupils in Years 3 to 5 to produce extended pieces of writing. On the first day of the inspection, the pupils benefited from local farmers bringing their tractors to the school for the pupils to see. This prompted

much valuable learning, particularly in mathematics. Pupils in Key Stage 1 worked enthusiastically on measuring the length and width of the different shapes used to make up a picture of a tractor. The more-able pupils in the class were suitably challenged by learning to double their measurements and subsequently drew an enlarged picture of a tractor.

The quality of teaching

The school is making more effective use of its own good and outstanding practitioners to improve the consistency of teaching in the school. This, together with some support and guidance from the local authority and some new appointments, has led to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching.

Expectations of pupils are rising, including for the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1. The quality of daily lesson plans is much better and most plans now identify what pupils of differing abilities are expected to learn. Teachers now plan for their guided reading sessions. As a result, pupils are more focused on what they need to do to improve their reading. Teaching provides more opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively talking about their work and sharing ideas. The increased use of information and communication technology (ICT) in some classes is making a significant contribution to pupils' levels of engagement with their learning, and in supporting the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The use of learning ladders and target cards is beginning to make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and progress. Older pupils commented on how helpful they found their target cards in enabling them to know what they needed to do in order to progress to the next level of learning. Teaching and support staff make effective use of questions and a range of assessment strategies to support and enhance learning. In a good mathematics lesson in Key Stage 1, the teaching assistant's questions encouraged pupils to use key mathematical vocabulary in describing the properties of shapes, such as how many edges or faces they had. This took place while pupils explored repeating patterns using different shaped colourful wooden blocks.

Where teaching is less effective, it is because the pace of learning is either unnecessarily slow for the more-able pupils or not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of all pupils. Although most pupils enjoy their lessons, a few in lower Key Stage 2 say they do not find their literacy lessons sufficiently interesting.

Support staff are dedicated and hard-working, and most are generally well deployed in lessons. However, planning does not always include sufficient guidance to ensure that support staff are always used to best effect.

Most teachers now mark pupils' work consistently well across the school. While this is appreciated by pupils, they would welcome more praise and comments to celebrate their efforts and success.

Judgement

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that there is no inadequate teaching and over 60% is good by December 2011 - good

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe while at school. Pupils say they feel safe. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved, most of the time. On the rare occasion when this is not the case in lessons, it is because teaching fails to engage and motivate pupils, and is not sufficiently well adapted to meet pupils' needs. Pupils and some staff are of the view that not all staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently well. Pupils report that undesirable behaviour is most likely to occur in the playground or at lunchtime. They would welcome a greater amount of supervision in the playground, as well as all staff being more proactive in helping to resolve concerns brought to them by pupils.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher is providing strong and focused leadership and management. He has ensured that roles and responsibilities are clear and that staff are working more effectively together towards a shared vision. Teachers are held more closely to account for the progress being made by their pupils through close monitoring by the headteacher and pupils' progress meetings.

There is now a skills-based curriculum which promotes opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. This is being embedded well at Key Stage 1 and is developing at Key Stage 2. Most senior leaders are making a better contribution to helping the school to improve, but the role of middle leaders remains underdeveloped. Not all middle leaders have produced action plans for their areas of responsibility and therefore have not identified ways they can contribute to school improvement. The quality of action and improvement plans that are available remains variable. Too few include quantified targets, clear outcomes for pupils and interim milestones against which progress can be measured. Self-evaluation by the headteacher, the English subject leader and the special educational needs coordinator is becoming more rigorous and increasingly accurate. Senior leaders are generally able to judge progress correctly. Consequently, targets for English and mathematics have been revised and are now more challenging. However, reviews of the school's work are at times too descriptive rather than

evaluative and do not always include sufficient commentary about the impact that actions have had on pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, comparative judgements about the performance of different groups are now being made and this is helping staff to identify pockets of underachievement and consider how these can be addressed.

Administrative staff make a good contribution to helping the school to ensure that appropriate checks are made on the suitability of adults to work with children. Governors are more aware of the work of the school through the improved links, for example, with subject leaders. They are reviewing and updating policies systematically; however, they have yet to monitor the impact of the school's equality of opportunity policy. Governors, as well as key leaders and managers, are making an effective contribution to helping the school to promote a greater level of spiritual and cultural development for its pupils.

Judgement

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management - good

- Develop the curriculum - good

External support

The quality and impact of the external support has recently improved. Some aspects have been good, such as the increase in targeted support to help teachers to improve their practice. However, lesson observations have not always focused sharply enough on the quality of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and the impact that this has on their learning.