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20 April 2012

Miss L Hoyle
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 with Marian Thomas, additional inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 April 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 fifth 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 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

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to the following qualification:

- that the school provides them with regular support and guidance from a designated mentor, and they are not allocated the Year 6 class.

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 2012



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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 fifth monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 April 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed teaching and learning in every class in the school. They scrutinised school documents and reports. Discussions took place with school leaders, two groups of pupils, two members of the governing body and the School Effectiveness Officer. An inspector also observed a whole-school assembly conducted by the local vicar.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, the acting headteacher has been appointed as the permanent headteacher with effect from September 2012. A member of staff has been absent due to illness since January 2012 and her role is being covered by a supply teacher.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Evidence from lesson observations and the school's latest tracking data indicate that pupils in the school continue to make faster progress than they were previously. However, the school is aware that as well as ensuring that pupils make up for previously lost ground, it must also ensure that their attainment is reaching nationally set benchmarks. This is not yet the case for pupils in Year 6 and Year 2. Targeted interventions are paying dividends and deficits are closing. However, the school understands that a final push is imperative to close the remaining gaps more tellingly.

The school's latest tracking data show that the overall trend in progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage remains upward. However, there is more variability than seen on previous monitoring inspections, with some slowing of children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, their creative development, and problem solving and reasoning about number. Here, too, a final push effort is needed to ensure that more children reach age-related expectations by the end of the academic year.

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 – satisfactory

The quality of teaching

The joint lesson observations the lead inspector carried out with the headteacher showed that the impact of teaching on learning is continuing to improve and is more consistent and appropriately matched to pupils' individual needs. In particular, pupils responded well to the more active learning approach staff adopted, which allowed pupils to improvise, collaborate,

and lead their own learning. Effective lessons were punctuated by chances for pupils to demonstrate what they knew and apply their understanding in a practical way. This happened when they put themselves into the shoes of a Second World War evacuee and recounted their experiences. Pupils are also more aware of exactly what is expected of them and how to meet success criteria. Staff are also being supported and challenged to meet the requirements of a stringent capability policy.

The onus on developing and consolidating pupils' core learning skills across the curriculum is more embedded. Staff are more in touch with the principles that underpin effective learning and are applying them more routinely. Joint planning, exploring with parents how they can support home learning, and more tailored provision to tackle identified weaknesses in pupils' skills are all helping to narrow the remaining gaps in pupils' reading, mathematics and writing skills. The school accepts that aspects such as languages and more artistic pursuits are areas where provision could be enhanced. Nevertheless, the number of visits, visitors and 'immersion' days such as the book week are enriching pupils' experiences.

The impact of Early Years Foundation Stage provision on improving children's outcomes is less evident than on previous monitoring inspections. Staff training has focused on ensuring more effective progress among children with disabilities and those with special educational needs, and to encourage more child-initiated learning outdoors. Consequently, a series of changes have been made to the curriculum, observation protocols and the outdoor area to better facilitate this. Planning is more systematic in mapping out children's current attainment and the next steps in their learning. A series of non-negotiable directives are now in place to further promote high-quality consistency, challenge and enjoyment for all children.

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

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say they feel safe and that mostly they all get along, although they do admit that lessons are occasionally disrupted. Inspectors found that the school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and that the majority respond positively to the rewards and sanctions in place to promote their good behaviour. Pupils are keen to learn and attentive in class. They mostly relate well to each other and staff in lessons, and, at social times, they integrate and play happily together, although there are occasional disagreements. Scrutiny of the accident book indicated a number of recurring mishaps and the school knows that they need to investigate these further. The school has felt it necessary to introduce a detention system for pupils not adhering to the school's rules. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is improving and they contest the weekly class award keenly. The school also works closely with external agencies to raise the attendance of

those pupils persistently absent. Parents and carers have been advised of the negative impact regular or extended absence can have on their child's education.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders continue to tackle the school's areas for improvement with success. While these issues are not yet fully resolved, further gains have been secured in each aspect. Leaders' rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the impact of their improvement measures continues to inform their next steps. More recently, senior leaders have devolved leadership more widely. This is working well generally, but is not equally effective in all cases and it remains incumbent upon leaders to engender full commitment to the school's primary aims from all staff and engender corporate responsibility. Senior leaders' effective direction is having a positive impact on improving the school and it is continuing to become more effective. However, further improvements are necessary for there to be unequivocal evidence that all aspects are satisfactory, and to ensure that the school is likely to be removed from special measures at its re-inspection.

The governing body has resolved the leadership issue hanging over the school which has removed some of the question marks over stability and continuity in consolidating the improvements secured to date. It is now better able to interrogate school performance data and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's improvement strategies. The checks in place to ensure safeguarding procedures are rigorously applied continue to be refined, with the headteacher, administrator, governors and the caretaker regularly liaising about site security, health and safety, child protection and other safeguarding matters. The check on the school's single central register found that it met 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 support, guidance and funding to support the school's improvement. The main focus continues to be improving literacy and numeracy, and the school has also made use of external consultants for this work. A local authority review commended the school's continued recovery, while highlighting some deficiencies in middle leadership. This concurs with the fourth Ofsted monitoring report.