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21 June 2012

Mr M Mitchell
Headteacher
Langley Primary School
St Bernard's Road
Olton
Solihull
B92 7DJ

Dear Mr Mitchell

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Langley Primary School

Following my visit with Clare Saunders, Additional Inspector, to your school on 19–20 June 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 May 2011. 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed in lower Key Stage 2.

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 Solihull.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2011

- With immediate effect, take steps to improve the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures by:
 - setting up systems and procedures with clear lines of accountability to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils
 - carrying out thorough and regular risk assessments
 - establishing clear management responsibilities and record-keeping in relation to all aspects of safeguarding
 - establishing systems to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding measures.

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics and eradicate inadequate teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers have the skills and knowledge to accurately assess pupils' learning
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons which meet and challenge the individual learning needs and interest of all pupils
 - ensuring that marking supports pupils to make progress and is appropriate and relevant to the objectives of the intended learning
 - providing an appropriate curriculum, with opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills across a range of subjects
 - providing pupils with the opportunity to develop their skills to ensure progression in their learning.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing systems and procedures to assess the actions taken to improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and outcomes
 - involving all stakeholders in more effective action planning
 - empowering key senior and middle leaders to take responsibility for improving outcomes for all pupils.

- Increase the effectiveness of the governing body by:

- ensuring that it meets its statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding
- improving procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's actions in order to secure improvement.

Special measures: monitoring of Langley Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 19–20 June 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior leaders, a middle management group, five members of the governing body including the Chair, and three representatives of the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed from April 2012.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Work seen in lessons, pupils' books and the assessment information that the school has compiled, shows that standards in English and mathematics are rising for an increasing proportion of pupils. A sharper focus on improving pupils' writing, particularly in Years 2 and 6, is helping to narrow the gaps between their attainment and the national averages. The school's tracking data shows that, in mathematics, many more pupils are making the nationally expected progress. In Year 6, around a third of the pupils are exceeding the target set for them.

Observation of literacy lessons in the Reception classes and in Key Stage 1 showed pupils using a variety of strategies to read and understand text. In the Reception classes, children were encouraged to read and use number linked to a topic on travel. Children made satisfactory progress in the use of language and the application of number. A recent introduction of a new, more accessible tracking system is providing a clear picture of pupils' progress. Consequently, there are well-targeted intervention sessions for identified groups in Years 2 and 6 which are helping to accelerate pupils' progress. This is particularly so in writing, where a legacy of underperformance is greater than in reading and mathematics.

The performance of different groups, including by gender, ethnicity, disability and special educational need, are carefully tracked. Ongoing analysis of pupils' progress by teachers enables them to reshape lessons where necessary. Half-termly reviews by leaders are identifying underperformance accurately and suitable intervention strategies are increasingly helping to accelerate pupils' progress across the school in English and mathematics. School and subject leaders are confident that the 2012 teacher assessments for the end of Year 2 and test results for the end of Year 6 will match those attained nationally.

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

- raise attainment in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

The quality of teaching

The number of lessons that are taught well has continued to increase since the last monitoring inspection in March 2012. There is a concerted drive to make satisfactory teaching better and to increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding.

Teaching is now more suitably matched to pupils' needs and abilities; this was evident in the great number of lessons observed. Teaching assistants were deployed well to work with small groups and individuals, particularly to improve pupils' writing skills. The support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language is continuing to improve. The support encourages greater levels of independence for these pupils. This is boosting pupils' confidence and sustains their perseverance in learning.

In the good or better lessons seen, pupils showed very positive attitudes to learning and responded well to tasks that were challenging. Teachers are skilled in their questioning and motivate pupils to reach higher standards. Pupils work well to develop their speaking and listening skills in pairs and small groups. This provides a good basis for developing their writing skills. Often, teaching is made interesting through contextualising learning in real-life situations, for instance, in mathematics. Topics are interesting and capture pupils' imagination. For example, work done on Ancient Greek culture and beliefs culminated in Year 5 pupils performing for parents and carers and Key Stage 2 pupils in a morning assembly. Teachers are aware of the need to promote literacy and numeracy across different subjects and are largely successful in doing this. Pupils understand how well they are progressing through effective marking and dialogue with teachers. Where teaching is less effective, teachers' explanations and instructions are overlong, preventing pupils from quickly engaging practically in their learning.

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

- eradicate inadequate teaching – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

This was not an area of weakness at the previous inspection. Strengths noted at the time of the last monitoring inspection have been sustained. Pupils respond well to the school's behaviour expectations. Behaviour in the lessons observed and during play and lunchtimes was good. The school's self-evaluation is that staff work hard to help pupils understand what constitutes bullying. Discussions with pupils show that they are aware of different forms of bullying, including racial and cyber-bullying. The latter reflects the school's recent focus on 'e-safety'. Attendance continues to be above average and good punctuality is being sustained.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders and managers, including the governing body, are ambitious for the school's improvement. Self-evaluation is much improved, based on an increasingly accurate understanding of pupils' progress data and a rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching. The school's strengths and areas for improvement are known well to the school community. There is good clarity about improvement planning and what should be the school's priorities, derived from systematic and regular evaluations.

Since the last monitoring inspection, subject leaders' roles have developed well, with a sharper focus on pupils' attainment and progress. This is helping leaders to have a realistic picture and identify what needs to be done next. The governing body members have consolidated and built further on their strengths in holding the school to account, as well as supporting developments. Their close involvement in all aspects of the school's work, including ensuring that pupils are safe and that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, has improved considerably. There is a proactive approach from the governors and their improved understanding of the performance of different groups of pupils is enabling them to engage in rich discussions with school leaders.

Leaders and managers are acutely aware that the analysis and precise use of pupils' assessment information by class teachers, although improving this is still an area for development. The full impact on pupils' outcomes remains to be demonstrated over a longer period of time.

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

- take steps to improve the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures – outstanding
- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management – good
- increase the effectiveness of the governing body – good.

External support

The local authority has deployed consultants to support teachers' moderation of pupils' assessments in writing. This has led to improving practice. The appointment of a new deputy headteacher has resulted in the local authority decreasing support for leadership. The school is less reliant on external consultants and the local authority's proportionate approach to support is well-judged.