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9 November 2012

Mrs J Gorecka
Headteacher
St Martin's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Dorking
Ranmore Road
Dorking
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Dear Mrs Gorecka

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Martin's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Dorking

Following my visit to your school on 7 and 8 November 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2012. 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 the previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may not 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 Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Surrey County Council and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Guildford.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2012

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of leaders at all levels in monitoring the work of the school so that there is a shared understanding of what needs improving and how improvement can be achieved
 - making sharper use of the information from the monitoring of lessons to identify key development points for teachers and to set and follow up clear actions for improvement
 - sharpening the use of data so that underachievement is identified and tackled more quickly.

- Improve teaching in Key Stage 2 so that all pupils make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations and ensuring that they pitch work at the right level for all pupils
 - improving the marking of pupils' work so that they are clear about the next steps in learning
 - ensuring that all staff have good subject knowledge.

- Improve the curriculum in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that planning identifies clearly how skills are to be developed systematically and differing needs are to be met
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write and use literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects
 - ensuring that lessons always do enough to engage pupils fully in their learning.

Special measures: monitoring of St Martin's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Dorking

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 7–8 November 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed eight lessons in Key Stage 2 jointly with the headteacher and made brief visits to all the other classes in the school. The inspector also visited a small-group support session for pupils in Year 6. Meetings were held with a group of parents and carers, three members of the governing body, school staff, a representative from the local authority and with pupils. The inspector looked at the school's records of pupils' progress, teachers' planning and pupils' workbooks.

Context

The deputy headteacher resigned from her leadership role in the summer term. The leader for upper Key Stage 2 left the school at the end of May. The headteacher was not able to find suitable replacements in time for the start of the autumn term, so the local authority provided an interim deputy headteacher for two days a week and a part-time advanced skills teacher. The vacancies have now been filled and the new teachers will join the school in January.

The development of the wider leadership team has continued. There are new phase leaders in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 this term and the subject leaders for English and mathematics are partnered with senior leaders who have particular expertise in these subjects.

Four new parent and carer governors have recently joined the governing body. The committee structure of the governing body has been reorganised and now operates with two committees: 'children and learning' and 'resources'.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Achievement in the lower part of the school continues to be good. Across Key Stage 2, school tracking data show that most pupils made the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics last year and a greater proportion made good progress.

The outcomes of the end of Key Stage 2 assessments in Year 6 in 2012 also showed an improvement in pupils' attainment in both English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making expected progress in English during their time in Key Stage 2 was in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils making

expected progress in mathematics increased, but there were still too many pupils who did not make enough progress from their starting points in Year 3. It is clear that the school's focus on improving the teaching of mathematics is beginning to have an impact on outcomes for pupils. Many pupils made good progress in the mathematics lessons seen during the monitoring inspection.

Teachers assess pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics regularly and check carefully to see if any pupils are falling behind. They meet with senior leaders to identify pupils who need extra support and agree the actions that will be taken. Most teachers are now much more successful in working with their 'focus group' of pupils in lessons and teachers' most recent assessments show that a high proportion of targeted pupils made measurable progress in the first six weeks of the autumn term.

The school's tracking of pupils' progress shows that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make better progress over time in reading than in mathematics or writing. The reasons for this have not been fully investigated by the special educational needs coordinator.

The quality of teaching

Teachers have worked very hard since the last monitoring inspection to improve their practice. More teaching in Key Stage 2 is now consistently good. The majority of lessons seen during this inspection were well structured and most teachers in Key Stage 2 planned activities for their pupils that provided the right level of challenge. Teaching assistants were consistently well deployed and most made a valuable contribution to lessons, even when the teacher was directing the learning. Teachers say that they have a better understanding of the progress data for their class and most use the information effectively to plan next steps in learning. There are still a few classes in Key Stage 2 where the quality of teaching is not yet good, but these teachers are eager to develop their skills and are receptive to support from colleagues or external advisers.

In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and teachers ensure that pupils are actively involved in their learning. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson pupils were working in groups on a range of investigations with solids, liquids and gases. The teacher and teaching assistant skilfully questioned each group and encouraged pupils to use their scientific knowledge to explain what they had observed. All pupils made good progress and thoroughly enjoyed their learning.

The quality of teachers' marking is high and pupils say that the 'even better if' comments help them to improve. Teachers currently mark every piece of written work in great detail. Senior staff and teachers acknowledge that this is too demanding and agree that marking and feedback to pupils needs to be made more manageable.

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

- Improve teaching in Key Stage 2 so that all pupils make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics – good

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour seen in lessons on this monitoring inspection was consistently good. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in all classrooms. Pupils are interested in their learning and are keen to participate in discussions. They cooperate well with each other and share resources effectively. Teachers have high expectations of even the youngest pupils and insist that they are polite and well behaved. Children in the Reception classes have already learned to line up quietly, listen to each other in discussions and help tidy their classroom.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the headteacher has redoubled her efforts to drive improvement in the school. She has continued to visit lessons regularly, but she also draws together all the information from different monitoring activities so that she has a complete overview of the strengths and areas for development for each member of the teaching team. The headteacher's reports to the local authority and governors and the most recent summary of self-evaluation are robust and self-critical.

The headteacher has made very good use of the part-time interim deputy headteacher and advanced skills teacher provided by the local authority, but senior leaders acknowledge that they have been at full stretch without a full-time deputy headteacher or an upper Key Stage 2 leader. As a result, the improvement to subject leadership and other middle leadership roles, such as the coordination of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, has been satisfactory rather than good.

The subject leaders for mathematics and English are becoming more confident. They now check teachers' planning and pupils' work to see if staff have implemented agreed actions. They have drawn up action plans for their subjects that are carefully linked to the main school plan, but the plans are not sharp enough and do not have clear measurable outcomes or milestones so it is difficult to check progress or evaluate the success of their actions.

The special educational needs coordinator has had support from a local authority adviser. The adviser identified a number of areas that require attention and the coordinator drew up an action plan to address them, but she has found it difficult to plan her work since then. As a result, progress in some important areas has been limited.

School leaders now make much better use of data to track pupils' progress every half term. The headteacher presents clear reports to the governing body so that governors can evaluate how much progress pupils are making. The governing body is developing its skills so that it can challenge school leaders effectively. For example, key governors have been trained in the analysis of school performance data (RAISEonline).

The work of the new lower Key Stage 2 leader has had a significant impact on the quality of the curriculum. The new curriculum for Years 3 and 4 has been carefully planned so that topics such as 'scales and tails' and 'gladiators' provide pupils with memorable and exciting experiences. Pupils in both year groups spoke with great enthusiasm to the inspector about the themes they studied in the first half of this term. Parents and carers also reported that their children had found this work fascinating. Work has also started on the topic-based curriculum in Years 5 and 6.

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

- Strengthen leadership and management – satisfactory
- Improve the curriculum in Key Stage 2 – good

External support

Local authority support is reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of the school. It was recently agreed that the school no longer needed the support of a national leader of education. The interim deputy headteacher and the advanced skills teacher have provided very effective support to the school this term. This has enabled the headteacher to accelerate the drive for improvement. High-quality training provided by local authority consultants has contributed to a clear improvement in the quality of teaching.