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Mrs S Mitchell
Executive Headteacher
Hugo Meynell CofE (VC) Primary School
Eccleshall Road
Loggerheads
Market Drayton
TF9 4NU

Dear Mrs Mitchell

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hugo Meynell CofE (VC) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27–28 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 on 8 February 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 previous monitoring inspection – good

A newly qualified teacher 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 Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Make sure all pupils achieve good or better progress in their learning by:
 - eliminating any inadequate teaching by December 2012
 - ensuring teachers make effective use of assessment information, in order to provide work at the right level for pupils of all abilities
 - ensuring teachers use a variety of strategies to encourage all pupils' active engagement throughout the lesson
 - improving teachers' knowledge of teaching about the sounds letters make (phonics), guided reading and writing
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing and mathematical skills across different subjects
 - giving written feedback to pupils that provides them with clear guidance on what they need to improve their work.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing a rigorous cycle of checking teachers' planning, work in pupils' books and the progress pupils make
 - improving tracking systems to determine the progress made by each pupil from the beginning of each key stage, the start of a school year and term by term
 - improving performance management processes and making staff accountable for meeting challenging performance targets in relation to the rate of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - implementing a curriculum that supports the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in all National Curriculum subjects
 - developing the skills of all those with leadership responsibility, including the governing body, to support effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

- Ensure the governing body meets all statutory requirements by agreeing and regularly reviewing all statutory policies and procedures, especially those for safeguarding.

Special measures: monitoring of Hugo Meynell CofE (VC) Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 27–28 November 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, teaching and support staff, pupils, a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB).

Context

Since my previous monitoring visit, one teacher has left the school, and two staff are on long-term absence. Three temporary teachers are covering those roles. The school is currently led by an executive headteacher, who is also head of Seabridge Primary School. She is supported by the deputy headteacher of Seabridge. A new headteacher will start in January 2013.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Academic standards in English and mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 improved compared to 2011, in both key stages. This represented broadly average progress, and a significant improvement compared with 2011. Progress is better in English than in mathematics. Although boys achieved as well in English as they did in mathematics, more-able girls did not do as well as expected in 2012. Pupils' work in lessons is of average quality overall, with many demonstrating work above age-related expectations. The school has a mixed picture of current progress across different year groups, but has established a secure baseline from which to establish progress from September 2012. Overall, pupils are making the expected progress.

In the best lessons, pupils are stretched to attain high standards; for example, in a Year 2 lesson about 'Space', some pupils read from Key Stage 3 level science resources. In the mathematics lessons seen, pupils tackled substantial problems that really stretched them. They showed persistence in trying these tasks, and were prepared to take some time over grappling with the problems. In all classes, pupils like working independently and in collaborative groups. Some very good teamwork was evident in the Nursery class.

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

- Make sure all pupils achieve good or better progress in their learning – satisfactory.

The quality of teaching

I observed 11 lessons; the teaching was good or better in the majority, and was inadequate in none. Teachers now plan lessons that cater effectively for the wide range of abilities in each class, particularly in English and mathematics. In most lessons, teachers monitor learning effectively, and intervene to fine-tune activities for each group of pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. Teachers are now regularly using a variety of strategies that engage pupils in activities. In the best lessons, teachers use drama and role play to create an exciting mix of activities that fire pupils' imaginations. This inspires pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to attempt difficult yet interesting work, and to work as hard as they can to complete their activities. This approach is leading to memorable learning experiences that pupils are keen to talk about.

The teaching of reading to younger pupils is underpinned by good delivery of a nationally recognised programme about the sounds letters make (phonics). In many subjects, teachers continue to teach literacy and numeracy skills as well, using the subject, such as science, as the context for writing or mathematics. Teachers are all using a new marking policy that was implemented this term. They consistently recognise good work and make suggestions for improvement. Some suggestions are too vague, making it hard for individual pupils to take immediate action. Pupils are not yet regularly responding to the advice.

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

- Eliminate any inadequate teaching by December 2012 – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All pupils behave very well in lessons, and respond enthusiastically to their teachers. They collaborate well with each other from an early age. Their movement around the school is brisk yet courteous and considerate, and at break times they play as enthusiastically as they learn. The behaviour of pupils was not an area for improvement identified at the last inspection.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher, with expert support from the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, has insisted that staff have high expectations of pupils. They have introduced an excellent programme of monitoring, evaluation and training for teachers. School managers, colleagues from the partnership school and consultants from the local authority conduct frequent observations of lessons, scrutinise work, take feedback from pupils and track data about pupils' progress. This information is summarised in a succinct and easily understood format that helpfully shows improvements in teaching over time and allows all staff to understand their role in

school improvement. The process accurately identifies development points that inform further professional development activities.

The very effective training for recently appointed middle managers is inspiring them to take a full part in their own school's improvement. School managers now have confidence in teachers' assessment of pupils' progress, underpinned by good moderation of standards undertaken in conjunction with Seabridge staff and the local authority's consultants. The data are collated systematically then shared in a straightforward chat with teachers and teaching assistants.

The overall school curriculum has not yet been reviewed given the priority to improve teaching but will be addressed by the new headteacher. In their short- and medium-term planning, staff are taking better account of the links between subjects and taking opportunities to enhance the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The Interim Executive Board is tackling priority areas well, although with just four members, dealing with the backlog of neglected school policies is taking time. As they delve further into the previous management practices of the school, they are finding unresolved issues, for example those relating to premises. Having successfully dealt with safeguarding systems, they are now determinedly addressing aspects of health and safety.

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

- Improving the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels – outstanding.

External support

A number of local authority providers, including centrally based staff, provide good support for the school. The main source of support is through the partnership with Seabridge Primary School. Staff from the two schools observe each other's teaching, share in professional training, and work together on planning and assessment practice. Further consultancy support from local authority staff has focused on improving reading and has begun to improve outcomes for pupils.