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24 January 2013

Mrs S Kerwin
Headteacher
St Andrew's Maghull CE Primary School
Deyes Lane
Maghull, Liverpool
L31 6DE

Dear Mrs Kerwin

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Andrews CE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 and 23 January 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed with the agreement of the lead inspector.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 (IEB) and the Director of Young People and Families for Sefton.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in English, particularly writing, and mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations so that they are clear about what pupils in each year group should be achieving in reading, writing and mathematics
 - securing more rapid progress in writing by creating more opportunities for pupils to write in more depth across a greater range of subjects
 - ensuring teachers' assessment and marking provides more detailed feedback to enable pupils to understand the next steps that will move them on to higher levels of attainment
 - ensuring all teachers adapt work to enable pupils of all abilities to be sufficiently challenged, particularly the most able.

- Ensuring all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - eliminating inadequate teaching
 - sharing the best practice within the school to ensure a greater amount and consistency of good teaching
 - improve the pace of learning and pupils' engagement in lessons, ensuring they do not spend too long listening to teachers.

- Improve teaching, planning and organisation in the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure that adults interact effectively when children are engaged in independent activities.

- Establish robust and effective leadership, including governance, by:
 - ensuring self-evaluation is accurate
 - monitoring teaching and pupils' progress rigorously, and use this information to focus actions on improving pupils' achievement and to inform the professional development of staff.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 January 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior leaders, a group of pupils, the chair of the Interim Executive Board and the school's improvement partner.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit in September 2012 the deputy headteacher has resigned and an acting deputy headteacher was appointed in October 2012. In addition, three members of staff have left the school and two new members of staff have been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school has moved forward well since the previous monitoring visit. Pupils' achievement is strengthening as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence from lessons and pupils' books indicates that there are signs of better progress on the part of an increasing number of learners. This is because the school has successfully introduced several new strategies to raise pupils' achievement, which in turn are leading to improvements in classroom practice. The planning of lessons is more focused on what pupils will learn. There are clearer expectations of the progress pupils should make. The regular reviews of how well pupils are achieving are empowering staff to pinpoint pupils who are falling behind and set appropriate targets. This means that the planning of support and intervention for individuals and groups is much sharper. Furthermore, the school is in a much stronger position to identify the links between teaching, attainment and the progress pupils make.

However, senior leaders are aware that, while improving, pupils' progress in writing continues to lag behind that in reading. This is because opportunities to encourage pupils to write in different subjects are not always taken. In addition, there are inconsistencies in how teachers assess pupils' progress in writing, particularly at the higher levels.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and learning is improving well. Approximately 78% of lessons are now good and better and inadequate practice has been eradicated. A number of common strengths were seen in the majority of lessons. With greater confidence in their own ability teachers are now planning more exciting and practical activities that relate well to pupils' interests and abilities. Pupils are now more actively involved in their learning and teachers spend less time talking and explaining things to pupils

than they used to. Very good relationships exist between adults and pupils. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support. Although not yet consistent in all classes, teachers have increasing confidence to stand back and let pupils make the learning their own with carefully crafted activities that promote high levels of interest and discussion.

Senior leaders are not complacent and correctly recognise that the next challenge is to encourage pupils, particularly the more-able to use their independent thinking skills more effectively, such as the ability to infer, deduce, hypothesise and draw conclusions.

When the planning and teaching are at their very best, the impact on pupils' progress and their enjoyment is clear to see. For example, pupils in Year 6 made excellent progress in their understanding of the key features of persuasive writing by listening to a speech by Martin Luther King and in discussing and sharing their ideas with each other. This lesson confirmed how well the pupils can achieve when expectations are high and the teaching is imaginative.

In the lessons that still require improvement not enough is expected of pupils, particularly in mathematics, and on occasions pupils are not working at the correct level. In addition, in some lessons there is an imbalance between time and activity. For example, too much time spent cutting, sticking and gluing limits the time available for pupils to achieve the aims of the lesson.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave very well. They report that more of their work is interesting and challenging. During the inspection there was a purposeful and settled air to the school with pupils excited by many of the topics and activities in lessons. They are very aware of their targets and know how to reach the next level. As one child said, 'Our teachers move us up to a level and then when we understand and can do the work, they move us on again'.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

With the drive and determination of the headteacher, the commitment of staff and under the watchful eye of the Chair of the IEB, the school has turned the corner and the pace of change is accelerating. Everyone is stepping up to the mark and there is a strong momentum for improving the school. Morale is good, expectations have been raised and staff are learning from one another. As a group they can now see light at the end of the tunnel because they realise that their efforts are paying greater dividends.

Middle leadership has been strengthened. Following training staff are increasingly confident in evaluating their areas of responsibility through checking pupils' work,

analysing data and tracking pupils' progress. They are now more confident to carry out observations of teaching and learning and in providing valuable feedback to teachers about how to improve.

The work of the IEB remains focused and supportive. Members continue to deepen their knowledge of the school's performance through scrutinising the work of staff, challenging senior leaders and in analysing data. They remain forthright in their desire to see the school improve further and, looking ahead, are making plans to recruit a skilled and fully trained governing body to lead the school in the future.

The school is well poised to continue to improve over the next term and everything is coming together well to suggest that the school is on track to achieve its target date for removal of special measures in the forthcoming summer term.

External support

The local authority continues to provide an appropriate level of support and challenge to the school. On-going work is carefully targeted towards the needs of the school and in developing the capacity of senior leaders to take greater responsibility for improving the school. Overall, time given by local authority officers has reduced as the schools' ability to manage and direct its own improvement has strengthened.

Priorities for further improvement

- Increase opportunities for more-able pupils that encourage independent learning and the development of thinking skills
- Improve opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in different subjects.