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Mr Steve Cox
St Augustine's CofE (Voluntary Aided) Junior School
Palmerston Road
Peterborough
PE2 9DH

Dear Mr Cox

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Augustine's CofE (Voluntary Aided) Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 26–27 February 2013, 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 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

A newly qualified teacher may be appointed to the school.

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 Peterborough and the Director of Education for the Peterborough Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Chris Moodie
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Increase the rate of progress and raise attainment, particularly in writing, and especially that of boys and all pupils who find learning difficult by January 2013, by:
 - ensuring pupils are helped to respond to feedback about their work
 - increasing pupils' independence in learning and determination to consistently meet their targets.

- Improve the majority of teaching to good or better by January 2013 by:
 - ensuring each session has a sharply focused objective that moves the learning of all groups of pupils forward
 - ensuring that teachers check on the progress of all groups of pupils, particularly the less able, including those supported by teaching assistants
 - ensuring that the approach to teaching of phonics (linking letters to sounds) is consistent across the school.

- Strengthen the capacity of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
 - rapidly improving the use of data at all levels across the school, so that incisive analysis of the progress of groups of pupils is used to ensure that support strategies for pupils are effective.

Special measures: monitoring of St Augustine's CofE (Voluntary Aided) Junior School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 26–27 February 2013

The inspector observed the school's work, observed all teachers, scrutinised documents and pupils' work, analysed the school's assessment data and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, two members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and pupils.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, one teacher has retired and another has left the school. There are two temporary members of staff in place until the end of the summer term 2013.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The improvements seen at the last monitoring inspection have been sustained. All pupils are now making expected amounts of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The majority of pupils are exceeding the expected amount of progress in all three subjects. Evidence in pupils' books indicates that many pupils are making much better progress over time than they were a year ago. Boys and girls are making similar amounts of progress. This accelerated progress means that pupils are attaining at higher levels than in the recent past. Pupils in Year 6 are now on track to achieve the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 5 have also made good progress and are matching nationally expected levels of attainment. The attainment in Year 4 is above the national average for all three subject areas. This is also the case for Year 3 in reading and mathematics, although writing is slightly below the national expectation for pupils of this age.

Pupils' attitudes to their learning have improved since the last monitoring inspection. Lessons run smoothly and learning is very rarely disrupted. The great majority of pupils are focused on their tasks and are showing much more determination in completing them. Some pupils, notably those who are challenged by the work set for them, are engrossed in the activities and are reluctant to stop. Typical of this was a mathematics lesson involving the calculation of the area of triangles: pupils discussed the approaches they took before trying to resolve the problems, and then stuck at their task with great resilience. A small proportion of pupils are less well motivated by their work, and the pace of learning for these pupils is slower than for others. This group of pupils take more time to settle to their work, and make less progress.

Pupils' writing has improved at a rapid pace. They enjoy their writing more because it is linked to other learning. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are writing about character descriptions about Romans because this is the topic that they are currently studying. Pupils are making good use of feedback to improve their own work. One boy in Year 4 looked back through previous work to remind himself about exactly what he needed to do to improve his writing. Pupils value the very high quality marking and feedback that they receive. They read and understand the comments that teachers provide for them and frequently respond to these.

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

- increase the rate of progress and raise attainment, particularly in writing, and especially that of boys and all pupils who find learning difficult by January 2013 – good.

The quality of teaching

Teaching has improved and it is now consistently good. Teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils' individual needs and have high expectations of them throughout lessons. This means that learning is more rapid, and that pupils spend much less time listening to teachers as a full class and more time working in small groups with other pupils of a similar ability. Pupils are positive about these changes and have adapted quickly to work in different ways. For example, a group of more-able pupils were asked to work with a teaching assistant in a different room while the class teacher explained a task to the rest of the class. This allowed both groups to work at a pace which suited their needs and all pupils made good progress.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide support for pupils of all abilities. The use of questioning is good, and this allows pupils to explain their thinking to one another and to larger groups. This has resulted in pupils feeling more confident about asking questions themselves, and lessons are very purposeful. Teachers communicate what they want pupils to do clearly. However, they often move between groups too quickly without checking that all pupils are actively working on their tasks. The small proportions of pupils who are not fully motivated often begin their tasks more slowly because of this, and opportunities for rapid learning are lost.

The quality of teachers' marking is outstanding in English and mathematics. Feedback during lessons has also improved, and teachers are now assessing progress and understanding with groups of pupils before setting them more challenging work. An example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson when a group of pupils were learning to divide by 10 and 100. Having successfully taught a strategy, the teacher then asked the group to apply this learning to measurements in centimetres, millimetres and metres, stretching their learning much further.

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

- improve the majority of teaching to good or better by January 2013 – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The standard of behaviour in the school is good. Pupils' attitudes to their learning have improved considerably. Pupils comment that lessons are rarely disrupted and that the revised behaviour system is still popular. More pupils are now developing a sense of determination about their work, seen in several lessons where teachers had provided work that challenged and stretched pupils' understanding: few pupils were not prepared to stick to their task and try to work out a solution.

Pupils feel safe in the school and have positive relationships with all members of staff. This contributes to the calm and welcoming atmosphere around the school, and supports the renewed focus on learning in classrooms.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

School leaders have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do in order to continue improving. They are focused on improving the quality of teaching and behaviour. The school improvement plans are rigorous and detailed, and based around how well pupils are achieving. The assessment system provides school leaders and teachers with a good understanding about how well individual pupils are doing, in addition to important information about groups such as boys, girls, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. Where additional support is being provided, leaders are increasingly monitoring its impact and making alterations, where necessary. Leadership roles have expanded, and new leadership in mathematics is already having an impact on attainment and the quality of marking in this subject. The role of co-ordinating the lower school (Years 3 and 4) has been temporarily taken on by the headteacher and this has made the school's planning and marking procedures more consistent. A permanent appointment will be made for the autumn term 2013.

The governing body has a good awareness of how well the school is performing. Governors provide both challenge and support, and are involved in the evaluation of achievement. Visits to the school while the pupils are present mean that they have an increasingly clear understanding of how teaching and behaviour have improved in recent months.

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

- strengthen the capacity of leadership and management at all levels, including governance – good.

External support

The local authority has provided good support for the school. Since the last monitoring inspection it has begun to reduce the amount of support that the school receives. This is because the local authority regards the school to be in a much stronger position, and no longer requires intensive external support. The local authority has retained a regular overview of the school, and is set to maintain this in the near future.