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Mr M Shirley
Headteacher
Boyton Community Primary School
Boyton
Launceston
PL15 9RJ

Dear Mr Shirley

Special measures monitoring inspection of Boyton Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 2013, 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 fourth 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.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- As a matter of urgency, the local authority, together with the governing body, should improve the leadership and management of the school and raise the morale of staff by:
 - taking steps to bring stability at senior leadership level
 - providing clear strategic direction for the school's work
 - ensuring that essential systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are established
 - ensuring self-evaluation is accurate, so that weaknesses are identified effectively
 - drawing up and implementing a clear plan of action to address weaknesses.

- Raise attainment and improve progress, especially in mathematics in Key Stage 2, through:
 - ensuring that the work pupils are expected to complete is well matched to their different abilities and is sufficiently challenging
 - providing activities that are interesting and engaging
 - raising expectations of how pupils will present their work
 - ensuring that pupils know how well they are making progress
 - ensuring that teachers' marking is accurate and always helps pupils to know what to do to improve their work.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 12 September 2013

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' books, met with the executive headteacher, the previous assistant headteacher, a newly appointed assistant headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, the school administrator, parent representatives and a group of pupils. The inspector also met with a local authority representative.

Context

The governing body is continuing to pursue options with the Department for Education to become an academy.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The end of year, summer term 2013, assessment information appears to confirm senior leaders' view that underachievement is being effectively eradicated within the school. Mindful of the very small numbers of pupils in each year group, monitoring shows that nearly all pupils' made good progress in the previous academic year in their literacy and numeracy. As a result, the attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 is now more in line with the national average. In other year groups throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, there is a similar picture of pupils' good progress. This is because the system to identify pupils' individual learning needs is now securely embedded throughout the school. Along with teachers' raised expectations, all pupils are benefiting from good quality teaching on a daily basis. Consequently, different groups of pupils including most able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making similarly good and sometimes excellent progress relative to their varying starting points. For example, in a Key Stage 2 English lesson, pupils were helped to successfully edit their previous writing to make it more interesting to read. Each pupil was reminded of their current writing level and challenged to improve the quality of their writing still further. Pupils were successful because the teacher provided them with good vocabulary to support their writing and used humour appropriately to engage with pupils and maintain their interest throughout the lesson.

Children who completed the Early Years Foundation Stage in the summer have entered the next stage of their education with the skills and aptitudes a typical level of development for their age. The children who have only just begun their time in Class 1 have settled well given the very short time they have been in school. For example, they showed sustained concentration, enjoyment and fascination in the outdoor learning environment as they constructed a water course from pieces of guttering and experimented by varying the flow of water..

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching remains variable. Where good teaching was observed, teacher's careful preparations, high expectations for all levels of ability and the lively pace to the learning ensured pupils made good progress and showed positive attitudes to learning. Where teaching and learning require further improvement the content of the lesson failed to provide activities that were interesting and engaging for pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson the calculation task lacked clarity or purpose and so failed to fully challenge pupils and engage their interest. Similarly, in Class 1 time was not used well to meet the learning needs of all pupils. For example, older pupils were left without sufficient direction or support to direct their own learning while the teacher focused on the youngest children's learning.

Pupils are making better progress in their learning and where gaps remain in pupils' learning these are now being identified and closed through good teaching and support. The small numbers of pupils in each year group mean that teachers are able to provide pupils with learning experiences that are tailored to meet their individual learning needs. A close monitoring of the quality of teaching is being maintained by senior leaders to ensure the work provided by teachers is well matched to pupils' different abilities and is sufficiently challenging. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are included as much as possible in all class based learning activities. A work scrutiny carried out by the inspector and assistant headteacher confirmed this good progress in most pupils' work. For example, the use of 'grapple time' to allow pupils to respond to their teacher's marking works well. This is because teachers remain diligent in their marking and use this strategy to help pupils to know what to do to improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers who spoke with the inspector remain highly positive about the improvements to the school. They shared no concerns about the behaviour of pupils and spoke positively about their children's attitudes to school. They were particularly appreciative of how smoothly the induction of the new assistant headteacher into Key Stage 2 had gone. Pupils who spoke informally at lunch and break times to the inspector similarly confirmed their positive attitudes to school. They said bullying does not take place in the school anymore and that name calling is very minor and that usually no grudges are held. A review of the school's behaviour log books and records supports the views of pupils. However, the inspector found that incidents of inappropriate behaviour were not being recorded in detail. This was shared with the administrator and senior leaders who immediately set to work on introducing a more robust system of monitoring.

In good lessons pupils play an active part in the learning. They usually display a conscientious attitude to their work and are eager to please their teachers. Occasionally, when teaching fails to provide adequate opportunities for pupils to learn on their own or when activities fail to fully engage pupils' interests, they become easily distracted which hinders their learning and progress in lessons.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

A detailed time-line for the actions identified within the school improvement plan is providing clear strategic direction. This is allowing all leaders, staff and governors to ensure self-evaluation is accurate, maintain focus on monitoring and evaluate the school's core priorities to secure lasting improvements. The regular monitoring of teaching enables senior leaders to provide appropriate challenge as well as support to teachers where it is needed. However, teachers' targets for improvement are yet to be formally incorporated into the school's system of managing teachers' performance. Also, they are not being monitored frequently enough to bring about the desired rapid improvements in teaching that are still needed within the school.

The monitoring committee of the governing body is having a positive impact on driving school improvement. Governors meet regularly with senior leaders to check on pupils' progress and the work of the school and this in turn is enabling them to hold senior leaders regularly to account. For example, the recent low score of Year 1 pupils in the national phonics check resulted in governors asking questions about the quality of the teaching of phonics in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Senior leaders and governors are working closely with the local authority to secure stability at senior leadership level.. A new member of the teaching staff has settled quickly into routine and has begun to make a positive contribution to the life and work of the school. Senior leaders and the governing body remain committed to working in collaboration with the local authority in order to secure a sustainable future for the school. As a result, negotiations with the Department for Education continue to be held regarding the school's transition to academy status later in the year.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support and guidance particularly with regard to securing a sustainable future for the school. For example, it is currently supporting the school with on-going personnel issues and with another local authority, it brokered the appointment of the new teacher. The local authority has renewed confidence in the senior leadership and aims to gradually withdraw from direct involvement in the management of the school. However, it will maintain a monitoring role throughout the time leading up to academy conversion.