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Mrs Linda Clement
Kingsfold Primary School
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Dear Mrs Clement

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KINGSFOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit to your school on 29 and 30 April 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in April 2007. 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 – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education and Standards at Lancashire County Council.

Yours sincerely

Garry Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF KINGSFOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 29 and 30 April 2008

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, a group of pupils, a group of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

The leader of the Foundation stage, a member of the senior leadership team, is currently absent and her role is being covered by a seconded advanced skills teacher. A new member of staff has taken over the responsibility for the Key Stage 1 class since February 2008.

Achievement and standards

The analysis of performance against national tests and assessments was reported in the first monitoring visit. It will be reviewed when the results for 2008 are available. The school's monitoring data and a review of pupils' work demonstrate that standards remain below the national average in both key stages reflecting the legacy of previous underachievement within the school. However, standards are slowly improving in both key stages. The achievement of pupils is also improving, but not consistently in all year groups and subjects. The achievement in writing remains a particular weakness. Progress within the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to good, but this is not yet consistently reflected in the pupils' written work.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in April 2007:

- Increase the pace of pupils' progress towards higher standards, particularly in English and mathematics – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

The personal development and well-being of the pupils remains good and is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy school and contribute enthusiastically to lessons. They are keen to learn and talk enthusiastically about their work and the help their teachers give them. One pupil said 'We are more confident now. For example, Year 6 never used to sing in assembly, but you can hear them all now.' Behaviour is very good and pupils commented that it has improved significantly over recent years. There are extremely good relationships between pupils in classrooms and in the playground at breaks. Pupils play happily together making good use of the range of equipment provided. They are very friendly and are keen to share their positive views of the school with visitors. They enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities provided. Pupils enthusiastically describe the work of the school council and how it contributes to the development of the school and to the wider community through fund raising for charities.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching ranges from good to satisfactory. Lesson planning continues to improve with staff drawing on evaluations of pupils' previous learning, including those completed by teaching assistants, to design activities that build upon this and address any areas that require further consolidation. A well planned and resourced range of activities generally meet the needs of the full range of abilities within groups.

Where teaching is most effective teachers have high expectations and explain clearly to pupils what is expected of them and what they need to do to achieve their objectives. A good range of activities ensure that a brisk pace is maintained. Teachers use questions well to probe understanding and to challenge pupils to think. There is effective use of information and communications technology to enrich learning. Teaching assistants have clear roles, identified within lesson plans and provide very effective support for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and or disabilities.

Marking continues to improve. Teachers mark work regularly and use the codes from the marking policy to show pupils how well they are doing, often including useful advice on how to further improve their work. There is now an established system for setting targets for pupils and these are shared with parents. Pupils are increasingly aware of their targets and can explain how they are working towards them.

There is a good system for formally assessing pupils' progress each half term. The analysis of the assessments allows teachers to identify areas where there is a need for additional work and this informs planning. The assessment data are now used well to track pupils' progress across both key stages and to identify underachieving pupils. These pupils are supported effectively by additional intervention through teaching assistants.

The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection by ensuring that literacy and numeracy are delivered to pupils in Key Stage 1 in discrete year groups. This is allowing teachers to meet the needs of the wide range of abilities within the key stage more effectively. At present the planned curriculum places an emphasis on the development of reading skills, but there is insufficient balance in the provision of time for writing.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in April 2007:

- Use accurate assessment information to plan pupils' learning in lessons and to check they are making the best progress they can – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

There is a strong commitment to improvement. The senior leadership of the school continues to work hard to deliver the action plan and to monitor systematically its implementation. This is bringing about appropriate development of staff expertise in the use of assessment data and lesson evaluations to inform planning, in assessment for learning and in teaching literacy.

The systems for monitoring planning, observing lessons, reviewing pupils' work and questioning pupils on their learning are established. The initial focus of lesson observations was on particular aspects of delivery, but this was not sufficiently concentrated on the impact of the approaches on pupils' learning. There is a planned schedule for monitoring, but the regularity with which each aspect is completed is not sufficient to provide a comprehensive picture each term. Despite this, the systems are providing a useful range of data to inform planning and this has led to appropriate changes in priorities within the action plan. There are examples where the information is used well to inform a clear evaluation of provision and to plan for improvement. However, this cycle of monitoring, evaluation and planning is not sufficiently embedded in reviewing all priorities to contribute to a detailed overall evaluation. The head is aware of this and has identified it as her next priority. The role of the coordinators of the core subjects continues to develop and supported by the work of LA consultants they are bringing about improvement in the delivery of the subjects.

The governing body has been strengthened recently by the election of additional governors. It is committed to ensuring that the school makes progress by building on the strengths that they recognise to meet the needs of all pupils. Governors are increasingly involved in the daily working of the school and this is helping to develop their awareness and understanding of the issues to be addressed. The governing body has begun to undertake training to equip it to challenge more effectively the school to improve and this is beginning to happen.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in April 2007:

- Set more ambitious targets and timescales for improving the school's effectiveness with the full involvement of all those responsible for the leadership of the school – satisfactory.

External support

The LA continues to provide valued support to the school through its advisers and consultants. This has been effective in ensuring the accuracy of assessment has improved and in developing the skills of monitoring and evaluation. In addition training has ensured that staff expertise in the delivery of assessment for learning, guided reading and phonics has improved. There has been limited involvement in supporting the governors in further developing their effectiveness and this is an area for development.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the standards of writing by extending the opportunities for writing across the curriculum.