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1 December 2008

Mrs Linda Clement
Headteacher
Kingsfold Primary School
Martinfield Road
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Preston
Lancashire
PR1 9HJ

Dear Mrs Clement

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Kingsfold Primary School

Following my visit to your school with Peter McKay AI, on 27 and 28 November 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third 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 be appointed subject to discussion with the monitoring inspector.

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 Children's Services for Lancashire Local Authority (LA).

Yours sincerely

Sonya Williamson
H M Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Kingsfold Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 27-28 November 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, a group of governors, a representative from the LA and a local minister who works with the school.

Context

There have been no changes to the school's context since the time of the last monitoring inspection.

Achievement and standards

Standards remain below average. However, there has been a continued trend of improvement in all the core subjects. The results of the Year 2 assessments in 2008 showed a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in reading and writing, though in mathematics the proportions fell. In both reading and mathematics a small number of pupils reached the higher Level 3 for the first time in recent years. The school's provisional Key Stage 2 results were broadly average in all subjects. English results indicate a doubling of the proportion reaching the higher Level 5. There were also clear but more modest improvements in the previously weak area of writing. The proportions reaching the expected Level 4 in both mathematics and science increased. These results represent satisfactory progress for a cohort whose standards were similar at the end of Key Stage 1. Targets were met for mathematics and for the proportions achieving the expected level in science.

Most pupils in the school now make satisfactory progress and in some areas it is good. Standards seen in lessons and in pupils' work are, however, below average due to the legacy of previous underachievement. Inspection evidence shows that standards of work in the non-core subjects are generally lower than those in the core. Although the school is beginning to tackle underachievement more effectively, the inconsistency between year groups and subjects is an obstacle to ensuring that achievement is good enough across the school.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being is promoted well as a result of the good pastoral care, guidance and support they receive. Good support is given to vulnerable pupils and those who join at non-standard entry points. Attendance is

satisfactory. Behaviour in lessons seen during the inspection was outstanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive, those amongst pupils are positive. These aspects help pupils to respond well to the higher expectations that staff have of them as part of the drive to raise standards. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute their own ideas to school improvement. For example they suggested and helped to implement improvements to outdoor play facilities. When the school began to consider how it was going to develop pupils' writing skills, pupils were consulted and came up with good ideas about what would help them to write more and better. The school proudly displays pupils' improved writing in its bright corridors and classrooms. The trend towards higher standards in the core subjects and the improving opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills are helping to promote pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved. However, although there is no unsatisfactory teaching there is not yet enough which is good or outstanding to ensure that pupils' progress improves rapidly throughout the school. The very best practice, most evident in Key Stage 1, has not yet been sufficiently well shared and embedded across the school. The criteria used by the school to evaluate the quality of teaching constitute a framework for effective lessons. However, they have not yet been established as minimum expectation of teaching

Most lessons are well planned to provide clear links to previous and future learning. Clear objectives are explained so pupils understand what to do and what the expected learning outcomes are. Tasks and activities are matched to pupils' capabilities. Whole-class sessions are characterised by probing questioning and opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and opinions. Teaching assistants provide good support which is helpful and challenging. Good relationships and an atmosphere conducive to learning are underpinned by pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes.

The very best practice demonstrates a really sharp focus on meeting different needs, so there is challenge for all. This is based not only on pupils' prior attainment information but also on a diagnostic review of the previous lesson to inform the planning of the next steps for both teaching and learning. Tasks, materials and success criteria are tailored closely to different groups or even individual pupils. There are frequent checks on learning and teachers anticipate potential difficulties or misconceptions. Opportunities for self and peer assessment are routine. Lessons are very well managed and conducted at a rapid pace, matched by the rate of pupils' progress.

The school has recently implemented a new, well conceived and ambitious curriculum. This is planned to provide more opportunities for writing, offer more challenge in non-core subjects, increase creativity in learning, cut across subject

boundaries and inspire greater interest and motivation. Key skills and concepts in all subjects are developed through a broad range of topics and themes. The early response of pupils is positive as they believe lessons are much more enjoyable and their learning more effective. However, the monitoring of the non-core subject curriculum is presently not sufficiently robust or rigorous to ensure that it is delivered effectively and results in better achievement for pupils. A further concern is the lack of effective assessment and tracking procedures for these subjects. Teachers do not know how well pupils are making progress in relation to national standards and lack the necessary data to inform their planning.

Assessment procedures are strong in literacy and numeracy. Teachers usually use good quality, accurate assessment information to plan for three groups of pupils with different attainment levels who then have appropriately different tasks and support. This is resulting in improved rates of progress for pupils, although the highest attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Information is well used to inform planning for the lower attaining pupils who often receive very effective support from the highly committed and skilled teaching assistants. Detailed data about pupils' reading and problem solving for example, are not yet used specifically to inform the grouping of pupils for particular learning tasks. In other subjects there is very little information available to teachers to help them plan lessons to ensure individual pupil progress and therefore tasks are less tailored to learners' needs. Teachers' gathering of assessment information from their own lessons to check progress is improving but is not yet embedded. The range of techniques is sometimes limited and questions are not always sufficiently targeted at individuals or groups to enable the teachers to be sure that pupils have made the best progress they can.

The quality of academic guidance that pupils receive is improving. Pupils all have targets to improve specific aspects of their literacy and numeracy. They know their targets and are well supported in achieving them as a result of supportive and developmental marking using a consistent policy that all can understand. Pupils are usually given appropriate time to respond to marking comments. The learning environment is conducive to learning and pupils make good use of the 'learning walls' to help their understanding. Intervention activities and booster groups are well chosen and make a significant impact on pupils' progress. In other subjects, marking is less developmental because teachers do not have the assessment information they need to set the next steps in learning.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- 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

Good improvements to management systems have been effectively led by the headteacher and the senior managers with increasing inputs from the literacy subject leader. Interventions now result from the analysis of assessment data and

more widespread, frequent checking and evaluation strategies that are linked to whole-school improvement planning. However, the success criteria identified in checking and evaluation schedules and development plans are not yet sufficiently specific. Too few of them relate to measurable improvements in pupils' progress or standards, despite high quality reliable information being available. Similarly, some desired outcomes lack the specific detail that would enable staff to reach agreement about progress towards them and their ultimate achievement. There are good improvements to the rigour with which development priorities are discussed and appropriate actions identified. Outcomes from checking and evaluation are more widely shared but are not used well enough to bring about the changes needed in teachers' practice. In addition, there are changes in provision that are not being checked from the start. For example, the implementation of the new curriculum, the training and support needed by staff and their impact on pupils' outcomes are not being checked systematically.

The headteacher has developed a committed and capable team of staff. The models of leadership and management that have been developed in literacy and numeracy are good starting points from which to develop the skills of other subject leaders. The standards expected of pupils in literacy and numeracy and the standards that teachers set themselves in their planning and marking for example, are not yet being applied across all subjects. The governing body has gone through some personnel changes. Training has begun to develop their expertise as critical friends.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- 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 is providing satisfactory support to the school. Its plan of action is being followed and has contributed to satisfactory progress being made between each inspection visit. The type of support required has not always been sufficiently well adapted to the school's emerging needs. There are examples of where this has been achieved such as in developing the self-sustaining nature of leadership and management and the rigour of assessment systems. However, other aspects are less well supported such as training for governors and checking the quality of all areas of the school's work in preparation for it being removed from special measures according to planned timescales.

Priorities for further improvement

- Extend checking and evaluation to ensure the quality of curriculum, teaching, care, guidance and support and pupils' achievement and standards in the non-core subjects.