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29 January 2009

Mr M Barnes
The Acting Headteacher
Bridgerule Church of England Primary School
Bridgerule
Holsworthy
Devon
EX22 7EN

Dear Mr Barnes

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Bridgerule Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 January 2009, 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 February 2008. 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Chief Education Officer for Devon.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
H M Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Bridgerule Church of England Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 20 January 2009

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, met with the headteacher, the chair of governors, special needs representatives and spoke with pupils.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit the governing body has successfully appointed a new Key Stage 1 teacher. Governors have also begun formal consultations with the local authority and wider school community to secure a permanent federation with Bradford Community School. The headteacher from Bradford is currently the acting headteacher. He will remain in post until the school is successfully removed from special measures and the substantive headteacher appointed. Governors are hopeful that these arrangements will be in place for September 2009.

Achievement and standards

Strategies in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils will achieve have been successful. In the Key Stage 1 class, pupils' progress has been rapid in all areas of learning. As a result, standards in Key Stage 1 are now satisfactory. Achievement for pupils in Key Stage 2 is also at least satisfactory. Assessment procedures are now accurate and rigorously implemented, with outcomes used appropriately to inform teachers' planning. Teachers are successful in providing creative and stimulating lessons that engage and maintain pupils' interests. However, standards in Key Stage 2 remain inadequate due to the long period of prior underachievement experienced by many pupils. Information from the challenging and realistic targets set for pupils in English and mathematics suggests that pupils are on line to achieve broadly average standards by the end of this academic year. Pupils do not always understand how these personalised targets can help them to improve their work and achieve higher standards. Teaching assistants in both classes provide satisfactory support to learners under the direction of the class teachers.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- raise teacher expectations of what pupils will achieve by setting appropriately challenging targets for all pupils in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

This visit did not specifically focus on pupils' personal development and well-being. However, behaviour, both in and around the school, remains good. Pupils' motivation to learn has particularly improved in the Key Stage 1 class since the change of teacher. In conversation, pupils were polite, courteous and able to talk confidently about their work. 'Everyone's involved now,' said one enthusiastic Year 6 pupil. 'We have good work and displays to help us. I really enjoy coming to school.'

Quality of provision

Teaching is now at least satisfactory with some good teaching observed in both classes. The headteacher's self-evaluation concurs with this judgement.

Where teaching is good, expectations are high and the pace of lessons varies appropriately to ensure pupils remain motivated and on task. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to work independently and in small groups, such as in a Key Stage 2 science lesson where pupils were investigating the elasticity of tights. In both classes, teachers used questioning effectively to reinforce or extend pupils' learning. Pupils also have more opportunities to solve problems and reflect on their work. In the best lessons teachers demonstrated high expectations, a good level of appropriate challenge, and clear planning. Where lessons were less than good, planning was too general and targets lacked appropriate challenge. The pace of the lesson was often too slow, with too few opportunities for pupils to record their learning in meaningful ways. Although there is some good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons, there remains missed opportunities to use ICT effectively, especially in mathematics. Pupils are not always being guided to understand clearly how well they are doing. Higher achieving pupils, in particular, are not able to talk confidently about their standards or what they need to do next to improve their work.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- improve the quality of teaching by ensuring lessons provide the right level of challenge for all pupils and are conducted at a pace that enables them to make good progress – satisfactory
- provide pupils with clear guidance and specific targets to help them improve their standard of work and measure their progress – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and governors have continued to build on the good work evidenced at the previous monitoring visit. They have successfully resolved inadequate teaching and put into place procedures to appoint a permanent headteacher. Leaders remain focused on school improvement and the well-being of all pupils. The governing body has developed its leadership role significantly by taking advantage of training and development opportunities. Consequently, governors are now in a

stronger position to fulfil their legal responsibilities. They have maintained regular visits to the school and now receive clear and comprehensive reports from the headteacher on pupils' progress. In return, they support and challenge the school more effectively, understanding what is needed to sustain school improvement into the future.

The issue of securing a permanent headteacher is being pursued at the same time as entering into consultation with the local authority to consider a formal federation with another local community school. Good progress is being made in these areas with the result that governors and the local authority are hopeful that the appointment of a substantive headteacher and the federation of the school can both be achieved by the start of the new academic year in September 2009. Governors understand the successful resolution of these two issues is crucial in securing good capacity for further improvement.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- improve leadership and governance by developing expertise in monitoring the work of the school rigorously and dealing more effectively with weaknesses – good.

External support

Progress on the local authority's statement of action and the impact of its support are now good. The headteacher, staff and governors continue to appreciate the support they have received since the previous inspection. The local authority is active in supporting the governing body through the process of securing federation status and a permanent headteacher. A range of advisers and consultants remain available to support teachers, teaching assistants and have provided training for governors.

Priorities for further improvement

- To raise standards in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good in both classes.
- Guide pupils in their learning so that they clearly understand what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Secure the appointment of a substantive headteacher.