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21 April 2009

Mrs Karen Crutchfield  
The Headteacher  
Caen Community Primary School  
Caen Street  
Braunton  
Devon  
EX33 1AD

Dear Mrs Crutchfield

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Caen Community Primary School

Following my visit with David Edwards HMI to your school on 31 March and 1 April 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 June 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. 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 and Young People's Services for Devon.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Caen Community Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 31 March and 1 April

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, two governors, teachers and teaching assistants. Discussions also took place with pupils and a representative from the local authority.

## Context

Since the last monitoring visit the school roll has increased from 211 to 230 pupils. One of the two teachers on long term sick leave has returned to the school. A new information and communication technology (ICT) suite has been opened and other building work to replace temporary classrooms is near completion.

## Achievement and standards

Standards are improving and pupils' current progress is satisfactory; although standards are generally lower than might be expected, in part due to previous underachievement.

Pupils' results in national tests in English at the end of Year 6 were significantly below average in 2008. Since the last visit there has been a marked improvement in the quality of pupils' writing across the school, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in the Year 3 and Year 4 classes. This improvement has followed from the introduction of a systematic approach to teaching writing skills. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are still below average because pupils did not achieve as well as they should have in previous years. Current assessment information shows pupils are likely to attain better results at the end of the academic year in 2009. Standards in mathematics and science are broadly in line with or slightly below the national average and there remains variation between year groups. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might, particularly in science, and too few gain the higher levels in national tests at the end of Year 6.

In the Reception classes children are beginning to learn their letters and sounds, although opportunities to extend this learning through free play activities are sometimes missed. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies. Some individual pupils make good progress due to the detailed programme of support they receive. The progress of some other pupils is unclear because the school does not yet have reliable assessment information to show the impact of strategies used to raise their attainment.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science and improve pupils' progress – satisfactory.



## Personal development and well-being

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They report that whilst there used to be bullying in the past this has been tackled successfully by the school and it is now a rare occurrence. Their attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' achievements are recognised through the awarding of stars, certificates and earning to choose in 'discovery time'. The school newsletter lists the names of pupils who have received 'star awards'. In assemblies pupils consider moral themes, although opportunities are sometimes missed to celebrate whole school successes on these occasions. Pupils are encouraged to lead safe and healthy lifestyles through, for example, the provision of healthy food and the completion of cycling proficiency courses. They also learn to take responsibility and participate in the community by participating in the school council and by raising money for charity.

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least satisfactory and many had good features. Teachers have higher expectations and they are providing more creative and stimulating lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and display positive attitudes to their work. In some lessons, activities are directed too closely by the teacher which limits opportunities for pupils to think creatively and develop their own ideas. Marking of pupils' work is now generally consistent across the school and assessment information is used more effectively by teachers to plan lessons. Comments are mostly supportive of pupils' progress and note their achievements. They guide pupils in how to improve their work and often, but not always, pupils carry out these requests. Teaching assistants generally provide good support in lessons and often take responsibility for running small groups of pupils. Whilst fewer new staff have joined the school than at the time of the last visit, several staff changes have occurred in the past year which have had an impact on the stability of teaching and on pupils' learning.

The curriculum has appropriate balance between subjects and benefits from provision of the recently opened ICT suite. The improved ICT resources have had a marked impact on the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has increased its range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These include choir, recorder, skateboarding, tag rugby and football. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 speak with excitement about their recent residential trips to outdoor pursuits centres. Major building work and the constricted outdoor play area limit learning opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Systems are in place to identify pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the school is beginning to monitor the progress of these pupils. The school benefits from having skilled teaching assistants who keep detailed records of the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An appropriate range of external

support is utilised to ensure those with more complex needs receive specialised help. The detail of planning to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies between classes. It is good in some classes where pupils are set clear, short term targets which are checked regularly to measure progress. In some other classes, targets are not sufficiently precise which limits pupils' progress. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is split between different senior staff. As a result, the deployment of support and the evaluation of its impact are not always coordinated effectively. The special educational needs coordinator has been included in the school's senior leadership team and she has drawn up a plan showing the learning needs of pupils across the school and linking them to provision. These are positive steps.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that teaching promotes high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate through interesting activities that motivate pupils to learn – satisfactory
- develop systems to identify the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at an early stage, and provide them with appropriate work and support – satisfactory.

#### Leadership and management

Senior leaders have improved their ability to monitor and evaluate the school's performance and are developing the school's capacity for further improvement. They have introduced effective systems for checking pupils' progress and for monitoring teaching and learning which give a clearer picture of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The strong focus on improving teaching and learning is showing success in raising standards. Data are not yet analysed in detail and used to set challenging targets which ensure pupils are making fast enough progress. Senior leaders are developing their roles and in some cases their areas of responsibility are not sufficiently clear. Improved communication has been established with parents and carers. A regular newsletter is sent to parents which gives useful information on school activities. An active parent-teacher association is involved in raising funds for the school.

The governing body has a broad overview of the school's strengths and areas for further development. A committee is in place which reviews standards and receives detailed reports on aspects of the school's performance. Governors continue to work closely with the local authority to resolve remaining staffing issues.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- strengthen leadership and management by developing an effective team of leaders and managers to support and implement necessary change – satisfactory.

## External support

The school continues to benefit from a good level of support from the local authority. This includes visits from a range of advisers and consultants to support the development of teaching and the curriculum. The governing body has also received helpful advice and support, particularly from the human resources department. Senior leaders have benefited from the advice of experienced colleagues in other schools. The School Improvement Partner has visited the school and provided a detailed assessment of the school's performance. Whilst many milestones in the original action plan have been reached, some important ones relating to achievement and standards have proved to be quite challenging. Consequently, the current timescale for the school's improvement and for its removal from special measures is ambitious.

## Priorities for further improvement

No additional priorities have been given following this second monitoring visit and the school should continue to work on existing priorities.