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19 May 2009

Mr M Barnes
The 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 12 May 2009, 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 February 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since the previous monitoring visit – good.

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 third monitoring inspection: 12 May 2009

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, the chair of governors, English and mathematics coordinators, carried out two joint lesson observations, scrutinised documents and spoke informally with pupils.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit the governing body has been successful in completing the process to create a federation between Bridgerule School and another local primary school. As part of this process the appointment of a substantive headteacher has also successfully been resolved. From September 2009 the current acting headteacher, who is also the permanent headteacher at the other local primary school, will become the executive headteacher for both schools. In addition and most importantly, governors have continued to keep an appropriate focus on raising standards and maintaining school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Standards throughout the school are continuing to rise. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are demonstrating rapid progress in all areas of learning because of the very good teaching and support they receive. Key Stage 1 pupils likewise continue to make good progress overall and demonstrate standards of work that are now close to national expectations. This represents good achievement overall.

In the Key Stage 2 class pupils' progress is now consistently good. Assessment procedures continue to be accurately and rigorously implemented with data now used effectively by all staff to inform their planning and the next steps in learning for pupils. As a result, standards for most pupils in Key Stage 2 are now broadly in line with the national average. This represents good achievement overall when considering the long period of prior underachievement experienced by many pupils in Key Stage 2. The school is confident that the challenging, yet realistic, targets set for all pupils in English, mathematics and science should be achieved by the end of this academic year. Further school improvement work has been carried out on raising pupils' achievements in mathematics, to bring them in line with those for literacy and science. In addition, personalised targets have been introduced for all pupils to help them improve their work and achieve higher standards.

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 – good.

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, was observed and remains good. Pupils' enjoyment for learning was clearly demonstrated during lesson observations. In particular, their ability to work collaboratively together in solving mathematical problems of drafting a graph to show the germination rate of seeds was impressive. In conversation, pupils demonstrated good attitudes to school and their work. Older pupils are having opportunities to exercise peer coaching and self-monitoring skills which, in return, support pupils' personal development and well-being.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and support provided by teachers and other adults has continued to improve and is now consistently good in both classes. The headteacher ensures regular and thorough monitoring of teaching and learning with areas for improvement incorporated into the school improvement plan. The school's self-evaluation is accurate in stating teaching is now good throughout the school. Teachers build on pupils' prior knowledge appropriately to ensure pupils make good progress in their learning. Lesson plans show clear reference to learning intentions and outcomes and provide effectively for the needs of the individual. A stunning pirate ship, built by the youngest children, with the help and support of their teacher, is a fine example of how teachers provide creative and stimulating lessons through a curriculum that is well planned to incorporate the interests of children into their learning.

Teaching ensures the pace of lessons is brisk and pupils have good opportunities to work collaboratively together. Role play especially has begun to have a positive impact on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. There is good evidence within the curriculum of information and communication technology (ICT) being used to support pupils' learning. ICT is now better integrated into teaching and used as an effective tool to engage pupils' interests and enhance learning opportunities.

Professional development and training opportunities have been successfully undertaken by teaching assistants since the previous monitoring visit. As a result, the good working relations between teachers and learning assistants ensure pupils in both classes benefit from well planned, effective support in lessons. In addition, pupils receive individual, as well as whole class, targets which are regularly reviewed or updated. This is why the majority of pupils in school are now making consistently good progress in 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 – good
- provide pupils with clear guidance and specific targets to help them improve their standard of work and measure their progress – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Leadership at all levels remains focused on raising standards and improving the life chances of pupils, as evidenced by the headteacher's thorough and systematic focus on school improvement. Governors have wasted no time in successfully pursuing the federation agenda and achieving their desired outcome in the past week. Although the federation and substantive headteacher issues have been positively resolved, final details have yet to be concluded. A particular benefit noted by the school has been the effective collaboration between the two schools in their work towards becoming a federation.

A clear focus on continuing professional development is further developing the school's good capacity to improve further. The governing body is demonstrating an effective commitment to school improvement. The chair of governors is kept well informed of the school's progress by the headteacher, governor working parties and regular written reports. As a result, the governing body is able to provide informed rigorous challenge as well as support to the school. The school's self-evaluation is now accurate in all major respects.

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

The local authority's statement of action and the timeliness of its response for support have remained good. The headteacher, staff and governors continue to appreciate the support they have received in recent months. The successful completion of the process of securing federation status and a permanent headteacher is good evidence of the strength of this working partnership. While an exit strategy has been discussed between the school and local authority for when the school comes out of special measures, action has yet to be taken to reduce the level of external support currently required by the new leadership of the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Implement an exit strategy to demonstrate the school is now managing its own self-evaluation, monitoring of provision and improvement without undue recourse to external support.