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18 June 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 to your school on 16 and 17 June 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 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 third monitoring inspection, 16 and 17 June 2009

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, a governor, 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 fallen slightly from 230 to 224 pupils. Year 1 and Year 2 classes have moved into newly completed purpose-built accommodation. Work to provide outdoor play areas for these classes and the Early Years Foundation Stage is close to completion.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement and standards are improving, although the pace of improvement varies between different classes and subjects. At Key Stage 1, the trend of improving standards seen at the last visit has been sustained. The quality of pupils' work and their progress in lessons supports the school's view that a higher proportion of pupils than in the past are making expected progress for their age. At Key Stage 2, improvements have been made in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Years 3 and 4. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils do not reach high enough standards because recent improvements in teaching and learning have not yet been able to demonstrate their full impact on raising pupils' previous low attainment. Standards in science are below average with too few pupils gaining the higher levels in national tests. The school has only recently focused on this subject as an area for improvement.

In the Reception classes, the temporary arrangements for outdoor learning limit the opportunities for the free flow of indoor and outdoor activities. Some activities are directed too closely by adults, which limits children's ability to take the initiative in learning and work collaboratively with their peers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make better progress because their individual plans generally contain sharper targets and tasks are often broken into small steps to help them make tangible gains in their learning.

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 are attentive in lessons and behave well. They are keen to learn and pleased to discuss their work. They enjoy school, although some feel they could be given harder work. The school has developed effective systems for ensuring good behaviour and, as a result, exclusions have fallen and are now rare. Pupils recognise that behaviour at the school has improved and report they feel safe and that the few incidents of misbehaviour or bullying are dealt with effectively. Pupils feel the reward system of 'stars', certificates and small prizes is effective in recognising their achievements.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning continues to be satisfactory, with some good features. Teachers form positive relationship with pupils, offering praise and encouragement. A pleasant learning atmosphere prevails in lessons and classroom routines are well established. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and develop good work habits. However, activities are often directed too closely by the teacher and opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their own ideas and draw their own conclusions. This limits their broader understanding of issues and their inquiry skills. Teachers' planning is generally satisfactory, although sometimes there is a lack of detail to explain how the needs of pupils with different abilities are being met. A good feedback, marking and assessment policy has been introduced. Teachers' expectations are higher. Marking is more thorough and is used to make helpful suggestions as to how pupils might improve their work. The presentation of pupils' work has improved, reflected both in neater exercise books and in the better quality of written work. Teachers use attractive displays of pupils' work to support learning and pupils feel they receive the right amount of homework.

Satisfactory progress has been made in developing the curriculum. Topics have been introduced which often cross several subjects and focus on developing pupils' skills. Planning is not yet complete for all subjects and further work is currently taking place. A useful link has been established with the local secondary school to extend the curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy the mathematics sessions provided as part of this link which one aptly described as 'setting harder challenges'. The new accommodation in Key Stage 1 provides a very positive environment for learning.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been strengthened. Targets are clearer and activities broken into smaller steps for pupils with more complex needs which are helping them to make better progress. The role of the special educational needs coordinator has been enhanced. The school is beginning to analyse data to check the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to evaluate the impact of initiatives designed to help those who are underachieving. However, systematic monitoring of the progress of these pupils in lessons is not yet in place. A few pupils with complex needs are included in lessons alongside their peers and the curriculum planning is not always focused sufficiently on their individual needs, which limits their progress.



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 an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly, although arrangements to share the best practice across the school are underdeveloped. The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders and subject coordinators are becoming clearer. Some coordinators do not yet have sufficient opportunity to monitor their subject area, for example in science and special educational needs. The school is developing its use of data to check the progress of pupils and to set targets for their improvement. Pupils who struggle with their work are identified and given additional support. However, targets are not sufficiently ambitious for many pupils and do not stretch those who are making expected progress to achieve more. The school leadership has worked closely with the local authority to resolve outstanding staffing issues. The staff group is now more stable, and relatively few changes are envisaged for the beginning of the autumn term. The school continues to build a stronger partnership with parents. Detailed reports are sent home which include pupils' own self-assessment. Recent feedback from parents following receipt of these reports was very positive. Several parents have also been involved in work to improve the school environment.

The governing body is supportive of the school and has established a committee to review standards and the school's performance. It has worked effectively with the local authority to resolve staffing issues and has made the necessary adjustments in the school's organisation following reductions in its roll and budget. The governing body is not yet in a position to provide robust challenge to the leadership, for example by seeking clearer explanations when the school fails to reach agreed targets.

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 range of external support. It forms part of a local authority intervention and support programme and has received especially strong support for improving the quality of teaching in English and mathematics.



Support to improve teaching and learning in science has been less forthcoming and quite properly forms the next focus of intervention. Regular visits from the School Improvement Partner provide detailed and helpful reports on the school's progress.

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.

