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Mrs Marion Jones
Highley Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Jones

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Highley Community Primary School

Following my visit with Sally Hall, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10 –11 November 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 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 Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Services for Shropshire.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Highley Community Primary School**Report from the second monitoring inspection on 10 – 11 November 2009****Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, middle leaders, groups of pupils, a group of governors and local authority representatives.

Context

The new deputy headteacher has taken up his post from September 2009. There have been a few other staffing changes including the appointment of two new staff to start in January 2010 to replace staff that are leaving at the end of December.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Children enter Reception with skills slightly below those expected for their age. They make good progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.

Pupils generally start Year 1 with average standards. In 2009 Key Stage 1 results show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have fallen and are low. Progress across Key Stage 1 is inadequate. Observation of lessons also shows that progress is limited, because in some lessons lower attaining pupils have difficulty accessing the work. They do not understand what to do or the words used in are too complex and difficult for them to be able to complete tasks.

Unvalidated results from Key Stage 2 tests show that standards have risen in English and science, although they remain low in science. In mathematics standards have fallen to below average. Overall the progress pupils made has improved but it is still below average. However school records show that learning is becoming more established, particularly in Key Stage 2, and this is confirmed through classroom observations and work in books. Pupils are now making better progress in lessons and overtime in Key Stage 2.

Teachers use information on the level at which pupils are working to make sure higher attaining pupils are better challenged although there is still much to do to ensure this challenge is evidenced by good progress and higher standards. Pupils talk confidently about their individual literacy targets and how these are used to ensure they have a better understanding of what they need to do to get better. The school has plans to introduce numeracy targets in the very near future.

Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- In order to improve rates of progress and raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science, ensure teaching uses information from assessments to challenge all pupils at the right level and provides those needing additional help with high quality support. – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to adults. They showed due reverence and respect during the assembly to commemorate Remembrance Day. There have been no exclusions or reported racist incidents since the previous visit. Attendance is high with pupils enjoying coming to school. One pupil said, "Everything is ace". Pupils make a valuable contribution to the school and appreciate that their views are sought and acted upon, for example being able to change lunchtime arrangements.

Pupils generally show positive attitudes in lessons and around school with many saying that that lesson are becoming more fun and exciting. Attitudes to learning are good when pupils are suitably challenged. Pupils are developing independent learning skills; however some pupils are still not confident with these because they have had limited opportunities to develop them in previous years. This is also evident in the Reception Year where there is too much adult direction. Children have limited opportunities to develop independence through being able to explore and investigate things for themselves.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is continuing to improve. Lessons are usually active and proceed with a good pace. A range of activities are planned to meet the needs of differing abilities, although at times in Key Stage 1 lower attaining pupils have difficulty accessing the work. Although staff work hard to support individual or groups of pupils, others often sit passively and wait for help or to be given their next task. The curriculum is being enhanced through more activities to engage pupils in independent learning tasks. Pupils are starting to show improved skills in working in groups, with investigations and practical work. At times teachers spend too long talking and pupils do not get engaged in their learning quickly enough and there is an over reliance in some classes on worksheets.

Relationships between staff and pupils are good and the few incidents of off task behaviour are quickly and efficiently dealt with. Lessons start with learning objectives being pasted into pupils' books and these are then shared by teachers with pupils along with success criteria. Pupils are sometimes asked to explain what the objectives mean and time is not wasted by them laboriously copying these into their books. Objectives are then referred to during lessons to consolidate learning.

Marking is good in some classes but it remains inconsistent. In some books pupils are given good advice on how to improve but some opportunities for pupils to enter into a dialogue about their work are missed and they do not always have sufficient time to correct work.

The curriculum has been enhanced by working with local secondary schools so that pupils are able to study Spanish whilst others spoke about enjoying orienteering.

The Reception class outdoor area is now secure and the school is rightly concentrating on planning the equipment and resources needed to support all areas of learning in this area. Staff make observations of children's achievements and use these to plan activities matched to individual's needs, although children are not able to choose whether they learn in the indoor or outdoor environments.

The school have worked well to increase the guidance and support they provide for pupils. Parents are often involved with school activities, for example a group of over 20 parents were observed having lunch with their children, to sample the new dining arrangements. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage works well with parents to help them support their children's education as they start in the Reception class and there are good links with the local pre-school to help children settle into school quickly.

Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the curriculum so that it offers all pupils, particularly the more able, further opportunities to work independently. – satisfactory
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that all teachers set challenging targets and give pupils clear guidance as to how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. – satisfactory
- Provide children in the Reception class with a secure outdoor area to support their learning. – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The leadership of the school continues to improve with the headteacher, very well supported by the new deputy headteacher, giving a strong steer on what needs to be done to eradicate weaknesses. Staff are more engaged with the ambition to build upon the strengths within the school and ensure all areas are performing as well as possible. Managers are better able to lead their subject areas as they now have an improved understanding of what is required. They are taking on greater responsibility for monitoring the work in their areas and ensuring provision continues to get better. This is building the school's potential for sustained improvements.

Governors have increased their work in holding the school to account. There are now governors attached to all areas and governors are taking increased

responsibility to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Governors recently attended an update to safeguarding and child protection with staff and safeguarding is due to be discussed by all governors at their next meeting. The school complies with current requirements for safeguarding.

Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Make sure that leaders at all levels monitor the school's work rigorously and take effective action to drive school improvement. – good

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support for the school. Primary consultants work alongside subject leaders to support both curriculum areas and to enhance the leadership qualities of middle managers. The school adviser ensures the school is continuing to improve. Good joint working with local secondary schools helps extend the curriculum.

Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the rate of learning and progress for pupils in Key Stage 1.