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Mrs K Crutchfield
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Crutchfield

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Caen Community Primary School

Following my visit with Elizabeth Strange, Additional Inspector, to your school on 16 and 17 March, 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 fifth 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – 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 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 fifth monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 March 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed 11 lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, chair of governors, chair of the governing body's standards committee, teachers, groups of pupils and some parents. A telephone discussion also took place with a representative from the local authority.

Context

The school roll has increased from 205 to 230 pupils since the last monitoring visit, due mainly to the increased intake in the Reception class. Other aspects of the school's work have remained stable.

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

Pupils' achievement continues to improve. Standards in Key Stage 1 are rising steadily due to the improved quality of teaching. In the past, progress in Key Stage 2 has been slower. At the end of Year 6, pupils' results in national tests in 2009 were significantly below those expected for their age. However, the pace of improvement has quickened since the last visit. The school's assessment information and the quality of pupils' work demonstrate that standards have improved significantly in English, mathematics and science, with more pupils working at the levels expected for their age. New strategies have been introduced which have raised standards in literacy. They have been particularly successful with boys, who have underperformed more markedly than girls in the past. The quality of learning in lessons has improved and more imaginative topics are provided which capture pupils' interest. Pupils are now more confident when discussing their own ideas and listening to those of their peers, although they are still developing the skills to work independently for extended periods.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils feel positive about the school and recognise the improvements being made. They particularly like the recent opportunity to work with pupils of similar age in Years 5 and 6, and feel behaviour has improved in the playground since the provision of a wider range of play equipment. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection and pupils' attendance remains above average.

The effectiveness of provision

Teachers have higher expectations of pupils' learning. Clear classroom routines ensure pupils generally settle to work quickly and display positive attitudes to work. Lessons are planned to take greater account of the different age groups in each class, although sometimes work does not give enough challenge to more capable pupils. This limits their opportunity to start work quickly and develop their own ideas. Assessment has improved and pupils' progress is measured regularly throughout the year. Marking is now more consistent across classes and provides encouragement for pupils. The best examples include precise suggestions for pupils to improve their work, and these suggestions are then followed up. Sometimes pupils are involved gainfully in making suggestions on how they can improve their own and each other's work. The presentation of pupils' work continues to improve and learning is supported by attractive classroom displays.

The curriculum continues to develop well. Closer coordination of planning between classes is helping teachers respond more effectively to areas of underperformance. For example, grouping of pupils by age for some lessons in Years 5 and 6 has enabled a sharper focus on improving literacy skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have increased opportunities for developing their skills across subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used more widely in all classes, for example in producing 'published' books and in presenting data. The range of trips has been extended and is helping to broaden pupils' knowledge; for example, a recent trip to Plymouth included a visit to a synagogue and 'The Mayflower' exhibition. Pupils also enjoy the residential and after-school clubs on offer. The Early Years Foundation Stage benefits from a wider range of activities and resources. However, planning does not always focus sufficiently on achieving learning objectives, which limits opportunities to extend children's learning during creative play.

Pupils requiring additional support are identified at an early stage. Teaching assistants have benefited from good training and provide appropriate support to pupils who have more complex learning difficulties. They also run small groups for pupils who are underachieving in numeracy and literacy. The impact of this intervention is now measured more effectively and shows pupils are catching up.

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 – good
- develop systems to identify the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities at an early stage and provide them with appropriate work and support – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The drive for improvement has accelerated since the last visit. Senior leaders have a clearer understanding of the school's performance and have taken appropriate action to tackle areas of weakness. For example, the reorganisation of literacy groups in Years 5 and 6 is having a positive impact on raising standards and ICT is used more extensively to support learning. Leaders have a more accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement which is supported by a good system for checking pupils' progress. Data are analysed each half term to determine how well different groups are performing. This process of review is established well in mathematics and English and is being extended to other subjects.

Subject leaders have had a major focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, the success of which is evident in lessons. For example in science, work includes more opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment. In addition, support has been engaged from a local secondary school to teach groups of higher-attaining pupils. Subject leaders are developing their roles with enthusiasm and growing confidence. In a few areas, communication between senior leaders to ensure comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is not yet fully established. The school is currently refining the responsibilities of some senior leaders. Suitable plans are in place to take the school forward, although there is a lack of clarity about the system for allocating budgets linked to the improvement of individual subjects. Parents are developing closer links with the school and several report that they feel the school is more settled and that teaching has improved.

The governing body continues to monitor the school's work through its standards committee and receives detailed reports on the school's work. Governors are developing well their understanding of the school's performance through the analysis of data.

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 – good.

External support

The school continues to benefit from a good range of external support. Regular visits from the school improvement partner and local authority adviser have helped to give the school a comprehensive picture of its performance. The local authority has been particularly effective in providing support to improve the teaching of literacy. However, the school is now less reliant on external support due to the strengthening of its own capacity for improvement.

