

Suite 22 West
Lancs
Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320

5 March 2010

Mrs Lindsey Martin
Acting Headteacher
St Matthew's CofE Primary School
Westnewton
Wigton
Cumbria
CA7 3NT

Dear Mrs Martin

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 and 4 March 2010, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in January 2009. 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 – good

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed with the approval of the monitoring HMI.

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, the Carlisle diocese and the Director of Children's Services for Cumbria.

Yours sincerely



Angela Milner
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 March 2010

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspector observed eight lessons, scrutinised documents and pupils' work and listened to Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils read. A joint observation of a lesson was conducted with the acting headteacher and learning walks around the school were undertaken to observe small groups of pupils work on phonics and handwriting. Discussions were held with the acting headteacher, other members of staff and the chair of governors. She also met with the National Leader of Education from the partnership support school and representatives from the local authority. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work in lessons and around the school were also observed.

Context

A number of changes have been made to the staffing of the school since the previous monitoring visit in November 2009. The secondments of the acting headteacher and higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) from the partnership support school have been extended until the end of the summer term 2010. The temporary part-time newly qualified teacher has been appointed to a full-time position for the rest of the academic year.

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

Since September 2009, assessments throughout the school have become secure and the school has an accurate baseline in writing and mathematics from which to measure rates of pupils' progress. The school's assessment information, work in pupil's books and inspection evidence from lessons observed indicate that the pace of pupils' progress has accelerated since the previous monitoring visit. The best rates of progress have been in writing and guided reading owing to the strong emphasis on literacy over the last six months. Actions to overcome the legacy of underachievement are in place. Targeted group work is being used effectively to raise standards and meet the individual needs of pupils. Pupils have more opportunities to write at length and practise their skills in a range of contexts, but presentational and technical accuracy skills remain weak. The current emphasis on punctuation, handwriting and spelling skills is designed to address this. 'Rainbow Writing' resources are used effectively to allow pupils to learn to correct their own work. The emphasis on guided reading has led to improvements in reading at Key Stage 1. In science, the increased emphasis on investigative opportunities and accurate and independent recording at Key Stage 2 has resulted in good progress. Progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 is less than in other core subjects. The



school has correctly identified that this has resulted from significant gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding from previous years.

Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve pupils' progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Good relationships and an environment conducive to learning are reflected in pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes. This helps pupils respond to the higher expectations that staff have of them as part of the drive to raise attainment. Children play and work well together. The school's strong sense of community can be seen in collective activities such as eating lunch together and during assemblies. There is an increasing sense of pride in the school. Attendance remains high. There have been no pupil exclusions.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve, reflecting the impact of training and support that staff have received. During this monitoring visit, 85% of teaching was judged to be good or better. Lessons were well managed and generally conducted at a brisk pace. Teaching assistants continue to be used well to accelerate pupils' progress. Pupils are actively engaged in their own learning. They are making more progress because learning activities are carefully planned and structured to ensure they are well matched to pupils' learning needs and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Very clear links are made to previous and future learning. Detailed reviews of the previous lesson are used to inform planning and the next steps in teaching and learning. This means that pupils of all abilities are generally making good progress. In the most effective lessons teachers explain tasks clearly and use questioning well to check on pupils' understanding and encourage pupils to think for themselves. Electronic whiteboards and information and communication technology (ICT) are used well to enhance learning.

More consistent approaches to planning, assessment and marking are now in place. Assessment procedures are stronger in literacy and mathematics than in other subjects. Teachers link their marking well to pupils' learning objectives. Marking clearly identifies the next steps in learning so pupils know what to do to improve their work. Pupils understand their individual and curricular targets which are attractively displayed on learning walls. These targets are carefully tracked by teachers and teaching assistants to check on the progress pupils are making in their learning. Intervention activities and booster groups have had a positive impact on pupils' progress.



The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils are engaged and enthused by a diverse range of learning resources and motivating activities. Visits out of school and visitors to school have enriched the curriculum. The understanding of diversity in British society is being embedded in the curriculum. A strategic review of the curriculum for Key Stage 2 from September 2010 is planned for the summer term. Effective use is made of other curriculum areas to reinforce work in literacy, numeracy and ICT. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activities including drama and sports.

Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils are challenged, interested and make more rapid progress – good
- Ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and broadens their understanding of diversity in British society – satisfactory
- Improve the use of target-setting, marking and tracking pupils' achievements so that pupils know the progress they are making and what they need to do next – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

With the help and support of the local authority, steps have been taken to improve the quality of continuous provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last visit. There is now a more appropriate balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities inside and out. These activities are carefully differentiated to meet the needs of individual children. Planning now identifies the role different adults play in supporting children's learning and development. Good adult interventions are used to support and extend learning.

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation mean the school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The acting headteacher skilfully uses this information to establish priorities for development and seeks appropriate advice and guidance from the partner support school and the local authority to aid improvements. This has had a significant impact on the progress the school has made since the previous monitoring visit. The acting headteacher has worked extremely hard to increase capacity within the school. There is a culture of high expectations and a sense of collective accountability among all adults working in the school. This capable team are working well together to improve learning for pupils and to continually move the school forwards.

The governing body has gone through some personnel changes and continues to develop its expertise in monitoring and offering more critical challenge to the school.



Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve leadership and management at all levels so that the school has a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses and what it has to do to improve – good

External support

The local authority continues to provide valuable support and training to the school. As a result, it has a good understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. Excellent support from the literacy consultant and Early Years colleagues has had a significant impact on the progress made in literacy and in improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The National Leader in Education continues to offer invaluable support and challenge to the school. He has ensured that the performance management process has been used to establish clear targets for people to work towards, and that training and development needs are identified. Induction and support provided to the newly qualified teacher have been excellent. Good levels of training and support have been provided for governors to enable them to become more effective in monitoring and challenging the school. Discussions about the long term future of the school have taken place but have not yet been formally agreed by the governing body, the local authority and the diocese.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure pupils in Key Stage 2 make equally strong progress in their learning in mathematics as they do in other core subjects.
- Embed cultural diversity in the review of curriculum plans for Key Stage 2.

