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Mrs G Branch
Headteacher
All Saints C of E Primary School
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Dear Mrs Branch

Special measures: monitoring inspection of All Saints C of E Primary School

Following my visit with Kath Gethin, HMI, and Naila Zaffar, Additional Inspector, to your school on 09–10 February 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may only be appointed with the agreement of the lead inspector.

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's Services for Bury.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of All Saints C of E Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 09–10 February 2010:

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

Context

In the summer term 2009, prior to the previous inspection, the local authority identified the school to participate in the Improving Schools Programme (ISP). This included the allocation of a dedicated ISP consultant to work with the school. Following the school being placed in special measures in September 2009, it was re-categorised by the local authority to receive intensified support and increased time. In addition, the school was identified as an intensive Keys to Success school in the Greater Manchester Challenge and is receiving support from a specialist adviser.

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

Since the previous inspection the school has done a great deal to lay the foundations for improvements in pupils' learning and in raising their achievement. Pupils are eager to learn and apply themselves well in class. They particularly enjoy activities where they can make decisions and think of different ways of tackling their work by discussing and sharing their ideas with others. Although not yet consistent in all classes, opportunities for pupils to engage in their learning are beginning to gather pace. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the atmosphere buzzed with excitement as pupils made good progress in their understanding of equivalent fractions by using and applying their mathematical knowledge in a range of practical and stimulating activities. One child was delighted to discover for himself that four quarters was the same as a whole one. With excellent prompting and encouragement from the class teacher he was then absorbed in his work because he was allowed to investigate things for himself, take responsibility and direct his own learning.

Pupils' current work as well as the test results for 2009 show that increasing numbers of pupils are making better progress than previously and that standards are beginning to rise. This is also evident from the school's records which track pupils' achievement. A notable success is that in writing some pupils in Key Stage 2 have made gains of approximately one National Curriculum level in just one year. This reflects the improving impact of the school's work at intervention.



This rising trend is because the school has successfully introduced several new strategies to raise pupils' achievement, which in turn are leading to improvements in classroom practice. There are regular reviews of how well pupils are achieving and staff are held to account for the progress pupils are making. There are clearer expectations of the progress pupils should make. Improvements to tracking systems are enabling staff to identify more quickly those pupils who are underachieving. Teachers are gaining confidence in judging the level of pupils' work and are beginning to take greater responsibility for their own practice. As a consequence, support and intervention is planned more appropriately and staff have greater awareness of the needs of individual pupils and are increasingly confident in judging what pupils need to learn next.

Nevertheless, while improving, the progress pupils make in mathematics is not as rapid as in other areas. This because activities that encourage pupils to solve problems by using and applying their knowledge in practical situations are not consistently planned.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2009:

- Raise standards and achievement in all subjects, particularly in mathematics and writing in Key Stage 2 – satisfactory.

Other relevant outcomes for pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and behave well. Even when activities are less engaging, they concentrate well and try to do their best. Pupils have noticed that their lessons are increasingly more interesting, although some report that certain activities, particularly in mathematics, are too easy. Increasingly, they are proud of their achievements. For example, the school performed very well in the 'Maths in Motion' competition at local and national level. Pupils did extremely well to come out on top of all schools in the local area.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching is improving and is increasing the progress pupils make in lessons. A number of common strengths were seen. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and generally plan well. Relationships between adults and pupils are productive. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support, particularly for those who find learning difficult. Teachers use praise well to celebrate pupils' achievement and are skilled in developing pupils' thinking through effective questioning that keeps pupils on their toes. There is effective use of information and communication technology, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage where



provision is good. When the planning and teaching come together, the impact on pupils' work is strong, as when Year 6 pupils were preparing and presenting a balanced argument. The lively and interesting debate about whether graffiti was art or vandalism was a delight to see and take part in. This lesson confirmed just how well pupils can achieve when expectations are high; activities are engaging and the teaching imaginative.

Where teaching is less strong the range of teaching styles is limited, work is over-directed and too many worksheets are used. There is a lack of demand, stimulus and activity for some pupils. In these lessons assessment information is not used sufficiently well to plan challenging activities for higher-ability pupils. The development of pupils' independent and thinking skills is variable and lacks precision. Too often, activities for more-able pupils are not demanding enough. Many of the tasks lack sparkle and are restricted to composing a longer piece of writing or tackling another worksheet with insufficient attention given to the higher-order thinking skills that pupils need. In some books pupils were performing tasks that were not at the appropriate level for their ability and in some subjects all pupils were completing exactly the same tasks by copying out chunks of text and colouring in pictures.

In the main, although improving, teaching is not as effective as it could be because pupils are not consistently involved in making their own decisions and are too passive at times. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to test and deepen their knowledge in practical situations, particularly in mathematics.

Teachers' guidance to pupils through marking and target setting is patchy. There are some excellent examples, particularly in Year 6 literacy, where pupils are given clear advice on how to improve their work and reach their next target. However, this effective practice is not used consistently in all classes.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2009:

- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school is moving forward with a strong sense of commitment and a shared vision. Senior staff and governors have put the concerns of the past behind them, have established a clear agenda for improving the school and have set sail on the right course. They remain forthright in their desire to develop the expertise of staff further by empowering them to make decisions and have more confidence in their own ability. As a consequence, there is a positive approach to improvement,



teamwork is strong and staff are increasingly aware of their collective responsibility for improving the school.

The school has worked hard to improve and tighten its safeguarding procedures. Since the last inspection senior leaders have acted swiftly to ensure the premises are fully secure by extending the existing fencing around the building and providing coded locks for the doors. A safety report by the local authority has been implemented effectively. The school's central record of recruitment and vetting has been revised to record employees' qualifications, and systems to assess the suitability of employees to work with children are securely in place. A random check of documentation verified that statutory requirements are met in regard to fire drills and the procedure should a child be missing. All procedures meet current government requirements and staff are fully aware of the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils' well-being.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2009:

- Ensure the statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding are fully met – good.

External support

The local authority is providing an effective level of guidance and support to the school spearheaded well by the School Improvement Partner. The local authority's statement of action matches the school's priorities and includes elements of both support and challenge in all areas of improvement.

The local authority is committed to developing the skills of managers at all levels to enable them to monitor the quality of provision and use the outcomes of this to inform strategies for further improvement.

Priorities for further improvement

- Broaden the range of teaching styles to stimulate pupils' greater involvement in learning.
- Identify further opportunities for more-able pupils that encourage independent learning and the development of higher-order thinking skills.
- Create more practical opportunities in mathematics where pupils can use and apply their skills by solving problems and investigating things for themselves.