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18 June 2010

Mrs Lara Furmidge  
The Headteacher  
Crockerne Church of England Primary School  
Westward Drive  
Pill  
Bristol BS20 0JP

Dear Mrs Furmidge

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Crockerne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 and 10 June, 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 October 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

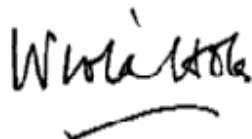
Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

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 Director of Children's Services for North Somerset and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wiola Hola".

Wiola Hola  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## Special measures: monitoring of Crockerne Church of England Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 June 2010

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work including 12 lessons or parts of lessons, scrutinised documents and pupils' written work, and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior staff, a group of staff, five governors, and three representatives from the local authority. The inspector also talked with pupils in lessons and at break times. The breakfast club, run by the school, was visited briefly.

### Context

The school is largely unchanged since October 2009. A teacher previously absent on long term sick leave has returned to teach one of the classes for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the other of these classes is still being taken by the same supply teacher. There are currently nine classes and a nursery. The school is expecting to establish two extra classes in September 2010. Three teachers have recently resigned and this, and the extra classes, has resulted in teaching vacancies to be filled for the start of the next academic year. The Children's Centre on the school's site is not being looked at as part of these monitoring visits.

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

Improvements to educational provision are beginning to show an impact in speeding up the rate of pupils' progress and raising standards, now that staff are clear about the school's priorities and working with clarity on them. Improved progress is clearly visible in Year 6 where pupils have been helped to catch up on previously lost ground. While results in the end of Year 6 tests in 2010 are predicted to be a little lower than in 2009, they are nevertheless expected by the school to show that pupils' progress from Year 2 has been generally satisfactory, and good in places. Work and assessment records seen for Year 6 pupils during this visit show that the large majority are now working at or above levels expected for their ages in English and mathematics.

Pupils' progress still shows variation between classes and year groups but not to such a marked extent as in February. The concerns previously expressed about the progress since the start of the academic year of pupils in Years 3 and 4 still exist now. The concerns also relate to some pupils in Year 5 but less so for those in Year 2. The progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and for pupils in Year 1, continues to be at least satisfactory. It is still not certain that in each class pupils are indeed making the progress that can be expected from the start of the year or key stage, or from entry into the school. Refinements to the school's system of recording attainment information are enabling staff to make increasingly secure judgements about pupils' progress; further refinements are still required before senior staff can



conduct analyses swiftly, especially in relation to groups of pupils. The progress of groups of pupils, and especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, will be explored at the next visit.

The quality and presentation of pupils' written work have improved, both in the exercise books and in displays around the school. The school's concerted efforts to improve the quality of teachers' marking and their use of assessment are bearing fruit in that pupils are clearer than before about how well they are doing. The setting of targets and pupils' understanding of them have improved greatly. Pupils talk knowledgably about what specifically they are working on in literacy and numeracy, referring to the target 'rockets' on display in their classrooms. As before, pupils enjoy school life and their work in many lessons. They show pride in their work and some were particularly keen to show the inspector how handwriting has improved. It has, and in a short space of time, because of the school's focus on it. The school is rightly continuing to work on strengthening pupils' skills in mental arithmetic because some weaknesses in this still exist.

Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are, in the main, only barely in line with what can be expected for their ages. The school is still experiencing some problems with resources for ICT but these are planned to be improved over the summer holidays. During this visit, pupils in Years 3 to 6 were studying topics linked to themes based on history; some good work was seen on Ancient Greece and Rome. Overall, however, there is still too little work on display or in books to show how well pupils learn in other subjects such as art or design and technology.

#### Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils feel secure and happy as they work in this orderly school. Attitudes to learning are positive and pupils concentrate well in most lessons, although some inattention does occasionally occur in the younger age groups. Pupils are polite and helpful. Attendance has improved and is approaching the school's target of 96%. There have been no exclusions for four years. On this visit, the extent of pupils' routine engagement in physical activity was explored and was found to be satisfactory. Pupils told the inspector how much they enjoy the variety of sport taking place at the moment, with athletics, rounders, cricket and swimming in the school's own pool. The girls are pleased to have a girls' football team. Pupils' contribution to the community will be explored in a subsequent visit.

#### The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is improving especially in the setting of higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, and in improved marking of pupils' work. Target setting, based on sound assessment of pupils' prior attainment, is established. Most teaching seen in this visit was satisfactory or good. Only one lesson was inadequate because the lesson plan covered too little new ground and tasks set were undemanding. In the good lessons, teaching was providing pupils with good levels of challenge, such as in the Year 6 lesson where pupils had to devise play scripts based on a previously



studied poem. Teachers' 'detective' skills, through which teachers determine which pupils have or have not grasped the concepts or skills being presented, are still too variable. Some teachers have a wide range of strategies for assessing pupils' learning moment by moment through a lesson, but others do not.

The curriculum is being strengthened so that basic skills are being promoted and developed across the curriculum and in increasingly interesting, meaningful and relevant contexts. There are already strengths in the curriculum for younger pupils in this respect. The curriculum in Years 3 to 6 shows some signs of improvement in the topics currently being studied, but it is still not yet adequate as a whole. Plans exist to develop the curriculum further for September 2010. The school has begun to lay out clearly how knowledge, skills and understanding are to be developed progressively in each subject, through thematic approaches or other ways. Some good work on this has already taken place, in history for example, but much still remains to be done. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities will be explored in the next visit.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that teaching is closely matched to all pupils' needs in Years 2 to 6 in order to accelerate their progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
  - using ongoing assessment to pitch tasks at the right level of challenge for different groups of pupils and to respond to pupils' needs in whole-class sessions
  - providing all pupils with clear feedback on what they are doing well and guidance on how to improve their performance – satisfactory progress
- make sure that the curriculum promotes effective progress by:
  - consistently building pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills from year to year and within each year
  - providing good opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in writing and mathematics across different subjects – satisfactory progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

At the time of the last visit, staff were still feeling unclear about the exact part they were to play in securing the school's improvement; this is no longer the case. There is now an appreciation of what needs to be in place for the school to be judged as satisfactory or better in all respects. Staff have worked together to set out the priorities so that their work is more manageable but still undertaken at an adequate pace. The many and various school improvement plans have been merged together to show a cohesive approach. Some good work has been undertaken to evaluate the impact of actions already taken, but the evaluations are not always sufficiently well focused on outcomes for pupils. Improvements in assessment are a good example of how staff are working in a concerted way to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. The routinely held meetings to discuss pupils' progress, class by class, are felt by staff to be central to raising standards. The process certainly enables staff to spot any underachievement and plan additional support for individual pupils as necessary. Lesson observations are conducted methodically but the notes made by



senior staff still do not comment in enough detail on what pupils have actually learned and if this is enough.

Subject leadership is being developed as part of the school's work on securing a sound curriculum. It is already showing some good features for English but, overall, there are still shortcomings in this area of the school's work.

Governance has been strengthened, primarily through the setting up of a school development plan group of governors. This group is working with good, clear terms of reference focused on examining pupils' attainment and progress as well as checking on actions being taken as laid out in the school development plan. Governors are becoming increasingly effective in holding the school to account for the quality of educational provision and outcomes for pupils. More work on this is still required. The reports governors receive from the headteacher are not of sufficiently good quality. In particular, they lack information about pupils' achievements, academic and other, and how well these are being improved. Governors have not set out clearly enough what key indicators of the school's performance they will be examining with a view to checking on how well the school is improving.

The school is still experiencing some difficulties in staffing and this problem is a barrier to swift improvement. Just under half of the teachers will be new or recently appointed to the school in September 2010 and, while this may be invigorating, it will place a demand on all staff to establish and ensure consistency of practice. In this academic year, there has been much use of supply teachers and this has not only resulted in some discontinuity of teaching and learning but also placed a strain on the school's finances. The absence of staff, and reasons for it, will be examined more closely at the next visit.

The staff and governors ensure pupils are kept safe. The necessary checks on staff have been made. Some minor administrative improvements are required in the way the checks and other information are recorded and stored.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- drive improvement and embed ambition by:
  - rigorously evaluating the impact of provision, particularly teaching, on pupils' progress and attainment and taking swift action for improvement
  - holding all teachers accountable for the quality of learning in their classes – satisfactory progress.

#### External support

The local authority is providing good support to the school. It has worked, and is working, with the headteacher to secure teachers to fill gaps and cover for absences, sometimes brokering support from other schools to arrange a secondment. The local authority has assisted financially in these arrangements. Advisers and consultants from the local authority are working well to strengthen teaching and learning and aspects of leadership and management. Support from the partner junior school



continues and is appreciated by staff at Crockerne as a valuable way to discuss good practice and exchange ideas. The local authority has added to its plans for supporting the school over curriculum development.

Priorities for further improvement

No further priorities are being given after this second monitoring inspection.