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Mr Chris Jones
Headteacher
Wykeham Primary School
Rainsford Way
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Essex
RM12 4BP

Dear Mr Jones,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Wykeham Primary School

Following my visit with Olson Davis, additional inspector, to your school on 11–12 May 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 November 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures is 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 Director of Children's Services for Havering.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Wykeham Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 11-12 May 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents. Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the leadership team, a group of staff, a group of governors and the principal inspector from the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with the School Improvement Partner.

Context

Since the school was subject to special measures in November 2009, there have been several changes to the staff and governing body; one teacher left last term and five others will be leaving at the end of this term, an additional governor has been appointed to the governing body and several others are new to the role. The school is now part of the Intensive Support Programme. Year 6 were taking the national attainment test at the time of this visit.

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

The school was asked to accelerate pupils' progress in writing, mathematics and science. Layered targets are in place in each class for writing and mathematics and there are early signs that the quality of writing across the school is improving, particularly for extended pieces of work. The targets are helping teachers and pupils to know what they are aiming for. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic writers, keen to commit their thoughts and ideas to paper. The school's tracking information indicates that attainment in English, mathematics and science for pupils now in Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with national averages. This maintains the position in 2009, when the decline in 2008 was halted. From their broadly average starting points, this indicates satisfactory progress for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. It is still the case that too few pupils reach the higher levels.

In February, a new system for tracking pupils' progress was established and, together with half-termly pupils' progress meetings, is helping teachers to be more aware of the rates of progress expected of pupils in their class. It is also helping senior staff to check and challenge the amount of progress made. But they are not yet making the best use of all the available information. For example, the tracking system is not yet being used to identify pupils at risk of underachievement, and individual targets are currently based on last year's assessments. The latter now need to be clearly linked to pupils' attainments at the end of the previous key stage. The school now needs to summarise and analyse the data for this academic year with sufficient rigour and clarity so that senior leaders and teachers have a clearer picture of how each year group and key stage are doing in relation to national



norms. In addition, there needs to be a clear view about whether or not pupils made the progress that they should. Clear, suitably-challenging targets need to be set for individual pupils and groups for the start of the autumn term, particularly those identified as underachieving, with a special focus on more able pupils who need to be challenged.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing, mathematics and science so that it is consistently good throughout the school – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils of all ages are keen to learn. Behaviour in class and on the playground is good. Staff are respected and pupils get along very well with one another. Their prompt start in lessons at the beginning of the day and after break times is particularly impressive. At around 93%, attendance for this academic year is a bit low. There have been 10 periods of fixed-term exclusion this academic year, involving four pupils for a total of 22 days. This is an increase on last year.

The effectiveness of provision

It is still the case that inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this visit, although monitoring by the school and the local authority identifies a small amount of inadequate teaching in mathematics. Nevertheless, as a result of focused staff training and regular monitoring, consistency has improved in relation to lesson plans and teaching strategies. Lessons are planned around appropriate targets and objectives and classroom displays provide good reference points to support pupils in their work. But teachers are not always referring to the targets enough during lessons and pupils are not using them for assessing for themselves how well they are working towards the targets. Teachers are making good use of supportive strategies to help pupils organise their thoughts before they start to write and this is making a positive difference to their achievements in this area. Learning activities tend to be the same for everyone in the class and not sufficiently different to suit pupils' different learning styles and abilities, particularly for those who are most able. The pace of learning in lessons is generally good, contributing to pupils' good attitudes to work. Areas of particular inconsistency include the application of the school's marking policy and the deployment of support staff when the teacher is talking to the whole class. Staff have worked very hard since the last inspection and are keen to do whatever it takes to improve their practice. They engage in good quality professional debate, sharing ideas and supporting one another with planning.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good – satisfactory



The effectiveness of leadership and management

The pace of progress with this area for improvement is satisfactory at this time because new and suitable systems are now in place and, although the difference is only just starting to be evident, early signs are encouraging. However, the pace of change now needs to accelerate to make up for some lost time. The leadership team now need to give very clear guidance to staff about what is expected of them and how to do it. In addition, senior staff and governors need to demonstrate that they have a very clear understanding of the difference that their actions make in relation to improved academic outcomes for the pupils.

More rigour has been injected into the work of the leadership team and the governing body. Teachers are now observed regularly and given feedback on the priorities for improvement. But areas for improvement are not always worded clearly enough for teachers to know exactly what they need to do differently. This is partly because the information gathered does not focus sufficiently on the progress made by the pupils in the lesson. The tracking system is now up and running, with data accumulating as assessments are more focused and more frequent. The information now needs to be better used to evaluate the extent to which pupils are doing as well as they should as individuals, groups, cohorts and across each key stage. The monitoring and evaluation cycle is yet to be finalised and this is to be sensibly devised in tandem with that of the governing body.

Governors, many of whom were new to their role at the time of the last inspection, are taking their responsibilities very seriously and now have more information that they can use to challenge the school's work. This is helping them to be better informed and also to be more aware of what they need to know more about. For example, now that they have more information about pupils' attainment, they recognise their need to have a greater understanding of it. Training on this aspect of their work has been planned accordingly. Firming up of their roles and responsibilities is also currently underway.

Nominated senior staff and governors have not monitored the single central record of checks made on staff thoroughly enough. The record contains most of the required information and shows that all relevant staff and visitors have an enhanced check from the Criminal Records Bureau. Evidence of when the checks were made and by whom are not on the register, nor are any relevant checks for staff from overseas or their right to work in the United Kingdom.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Increase the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors in driving improvement – satisfactory



External support

The local authority's statement of action meets all of Ofsted's requirements. A single plan sensibly combines the actions, monitoring and evaluation activities of the school and the local authority. The plan provides a suitable set of actions to address weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Staff and governors are positive about the support that they have had from consultants and local authority advisors. In addition, the headteacher values the professional contact with a Local Leader in Education, whose support is brokered by the local authority through the City Challenge national initiative.

Priorities for further improvement

No additional priorities are identified at this time.