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9 July 2010

Mrs K Keiran
Headteacher
Hive Street
Hollinwood
Oldham
Lancashire
OL8 4QS

Dear Mrs Keiran

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Margaret's CofE Junior
Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 7 and 8 July 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 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 – good

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed subject to discussions with 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 the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for
Oldham and the Diocese of Manchester.

Yours sincerely

Brenda McIntosh
Lead Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 7 and 8 July 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed nine lessons including an extensive observation of the Early Years Foundation Stage; scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other key staff, a group of governors, pupils and the School Improvement Partner.

Context

The building work is now complete. As a result, the Nursery and Reception children are now taught alongside each other in the new purpose built accommodation. An additional temporary Reception teacher has been appointed to allow all the Reception children to be taught together. There is no longer a mixed Reception Year/Year1 class. Two of the Key Stage 1 classes are also housed in new accommodation. A new assistant headteacher has been appointed for September 2010 and will take responsibility for leading and managing the Early Years Foundation Stage. Two teachers have left and supply teachers are currently covering two classes until the end of this term. Two teachers have been appointed for September 2010. One of the assistant headteachers finishes his secondment at the end of this term.

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

Early indications from the most recent national test results for the current Year 6 indicate a substantial rise in attainment in English when compared to 2009 and challenging targets exceeded both at Level 4 and Level 5. Across the school the emphasis on improving pupils' reading and writing is paying off and an increasing number of pupils are working at the levels expected for their age. The work in books has improved as a result of the strong focus on basic skills and higher expectations in terms of handwriting, spelling and presentation. The school's tracking data also shows that while achievement is improving as pupils continue to make better progress in reading and writing, it is not yet consistently good enough across all classes. This is largely as a result of previously ineffective teaching and several changes in staffing within a particular year group. Whilst the current Year 2 cohort is still underachieving, progress is accelerating due to the much stronger teaching this term and pupils are making up lost ground rapidly. The senior leaders are aware that progress in mathematics is slower overall than in reading and writing across the school. However, there are examples where individuals and groups of pupils, particularly in Year 6 have benefitted from well targeted support to accelerate their progress and boost their attainment in mathematics.



Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- raise attainment in English - satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils continue to behave well in lessons. They say that they are still reading a lot both at school and at home and this has helped to improve their standards further. They have an increased awareness of their targets and like the way they are involved more in assessing their own learning. The 'Pen Licenses' which they now have to earn have clearly motivated them to improve the quality of their hand writing and presentation.

The effectiveness of provision

The overall quality of teaching has improved and the profile of teaching observed was better than at the previous visit. Although it has improved and there is evidence that some common features such as planning and matching work to the different abilities are becoming more consistent, it is still not strong enough across the whole school to ensure that pupils' progress is always good enough. There remains further work to be done. Learning objectives are routinely shared with pupils. The most successful lessons have a good pace and learning is checked frequently with the pupils so they know how well they are doing and what more they need to do to improve. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils drew up their own points to measure the success of their own learning. This kept them fully engaged and moved their learning on effectively. However, the learning in some lessons slows when this practice is not followed. Teachers' expectations relating to handwriting, spelling and presentation are now higher and the impact is seen in better outcomes. The marking of pupils' work has improved but the school plans to revisit this area to ensure greater consistency and increase its effectiveness. The monitoring of teaching has identified areas for improvement for each teacher and all have clear action plans. Effective use of specific training programmes is helping teachers to gain a better understanding of the expectations relating to the quality of teaching and learning and how to improve their performance.

The school has clear criteria for identifying its most able pupils and teachers now have raised expectations about what these pupils can achieve. The school's data indicates an increasing number of pupils are now working at levels above the expectations for their age but there is more to be done to ensure their progress is consistently good enough across the school.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:



- improve attainment and progress for the most able pupils, particularly in English, by ensuring lessons consistently include work that provides sufficient challenge for all - satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the last visit, the school has put into place a commercially designed system for tracking pupils' progress. This is already providing the senior leaders with a wealth of information about the progress of individuals, groups and cohorts. The analysis of data is becoming much sharper and leading to increasingly accurate judgements about pupils' progress. Any underachievement is spotted more quickly and additional support given to pupils to get them back on track. Senior leaders are fully aware that they have not yet had time to explore the full potential of the tracking system and its contribution to school improvement planning. Self-evaluation is strengthening. The evaluations of actions taken to improve performance are sharper and clearly pinpoint the next steps for improvement. This is particularly evident for the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection but less so, for example, in mathematics. The monitoring of teaching and learning is increasingly robust and takes into account a range of evidence. As a result, the senior leaders have a clearer view of where the weaknesses in teaching remain. They are mindful of the importance of establishing consistency in practice and communicating this to new teaching staff in September. The school has plans to revisit the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders to ensure best use of expertise in the drive for improvement.

The headteacher has provided strong leadership and clear direction to the developments in the Early Years Foundation Stage. She took the decision for the speedy move of the nursery into the new building which has enabled the separate Nursery and Reception classes to become a single Early Years Foundation Stage unit. This has meant that there has been a rapid move forward in terms of increasing the effectiveness of the provision and, importantly, all Reception children now have access to the provision to which they are entitled. All staff are contributing to the development of the unit and have a clearer understanding about their roles and responsibilities. They are working as a team and share the headteacher's vision for the development of the unit. There is an increased awareness of the learning and development and statutory welfare requirements. This can be seen, for example, in clearer routines for developing good hygiene practices and better adult interaction in supporting children's learning. There is now consistency in planning across the Nursery and Reception classes with whole-unit topics planned for which take greater account of children's needs and interests. A more systematic approach is developing for observing and assessing children's achievements and planning for next steps in learning. Staff are more aware of gaps in children's learning and the provision that is needed to address these. The school's data indicates that children's attainment is rising. The school has made good use of the local authority to improve its provision



and has now commissioned its own external support to help develop the outdoor area further. A firm foundation has been established on which to secure further improvements as the new leader is inducted into the senior leadership team and her role as leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The governing body has worked hard with great commitment to increase its effectiveness through a comprehensive training programme. Governors find things out for themselves and talk knowledgeably about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their role in monitoring classroom practice has developed well and this enables them to raise their own questions and challenge the school about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The committee structure is developing well with more consistent minute taking to ensure an accurate reflection of their impact on school improvement. Governors have been fully involved in the appointment of new staff for September and are keen to ensure 'St Margaret's' way of working and using best practice to improve performance. Since the last visit, governors have ensured that improvements to the security of the site have been made following completion of the building work.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of the school's development planning by ensuring that it focuses on the school's most important priorities, identified through accurate and thorough self-evaluation - good
- establish clear leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage - good
- ensure that the governing body provides sufficient challenge and support to the school and fulfils all statutory requirements - good

External support

The local authority continues to provide good focused support to the school. This has impacted on the improvements seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in raising attainment in English. The school has also received support from a headteacher of a lead assessment school to assist with developing the links between assessment and planning. The school values the support and guidance received from the School Improvement Partner.

Priorities for further improvement

- Maintain the momentum of the drive for improvement by:
 - bringing a sharper focus to accelerating pupils' progress in mathematics across the school
 - revising roles and responsibilities within the senior leadership team
 - inducting newly appointed teachers effectively into the school's systems.

