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Mrs H Davies
Lickhill Primary School
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DY13 8UA

10 June 2010

Dear Mrs Davies

Special measures: monitoring inspection of School

Following my visit to your school on 8-9 June 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good
Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to the following conditions. The newly qualified teacher should be mentored in school by a teacher of proven high quality, and all newly qualified teacher entitlements must be met in full. Appropriate internal and external development, support and induction must be provided.

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 interim executive board and the Director of Children's Services for Worcestershire.

Yours sincerely
Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Lickhill Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 8-9 June 2010

Evidence

An inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and senior staff, groups of pupils and parents, the chair of the interim executive board and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Two new teachers have taken up post since Easter.

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

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage start school with skills that vary from year to year. The current group started with skills that were broadly in line with expectations. They are making satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning. The school has used its assessment data effectively to identify and promptly remedy weaker areas of learning. For example, teachers' planning shows an increased focus in lessons on these areas of learning.

Teachers' assessments indicate that pupils in Year 6 are at national expectations in English and mathematics. They indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in writing, reading and mathematics have improved compared with previous years. The school's assessment data and tracking of pupils' progress show that weaker areas of learning have been tackled well since the autumn term. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least satisfactory progress.

Teachers now ensure that pupils' work is more closely matched to their individual needs. Thus, higher attaining pupils are now better challenged by their work. Their progress is further supported with carefully thought out homework which is helping to extending the pupils' thinking.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- eliminate underachievement, raise standards and increase rates of progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 and for the most able pupils throughout the school - good.



Other relevant pupil outcomes

Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils are confident that their teachers care about them and are doing their best for them. These strong relationships underpin the improvement in behaviour, as pupils want to behave well for staff. Pupils say that they now take responsibility for themselves and they are able to make good decisions. Older ones enjoy the responsibility they exercise with younger pupils and understand they are expected to set good examples. Bullying is now very rare and is dealt with consistently, and pupils are confident that it will be taken seriously. Attendance is satisfactory. Further improvements have resulted from the reduction in persistent absences. Parents are now aware of the implications for their child's education if they miss periods of schooling and there has been a reduction in the numbers of days lost because of holidays during term time.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching has improved and is good in the majority of lessons; some is outstanding, as a result of the school's focus on how pupils learn. Teachers now reflect on what pupils have learnt. This has improved planning and increased the opportunities for pupil-led learning. Pupils are beginning to talk about their own learning and older pupils talk about being 'resilient learners'. All pupils are not always fully involved in whole class activities. The school uses data effectively to match activities to pupils' needs and interests. This has increased pupils' interest and motivation for learning. In addition, staff share and discuss data. This has improved teachers' understanding of pupils' needs and identified weaknesses in pupils' learning. For example, teachers recognised there were gaps in pupils' mathematical understanding and so they put in place regular opportunities for pupils to practise their mental mathematics skills and to improve their confidence in using multiplication tables. Pupils increasingly use mark schemes to mark each other's work and to identify where improvements can be made. They explained how this has helped them to improve their own work. They value each other's work and show respect to each other and the staff. Teaching assistants work very usefully to help pupils keep up and explain difficult concepts when pupils are involved in group work. They are not always as well deployed during whole-class activities and opportunities are missed to check pupils' developing understanding of work or to include more pupils when questions are asked.

Teachers are increasingly skilled in their use of questions. Teachers are beginning to use questioning to get a clear picture of pupils' understanding. In outstanding lessons, pupils are expected to explain their thinking and teachers understand pupils' gaps in knowledge and misunderstandings in their learning. These are then promptly



addressed. Teachers are beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to practise their targets for learning. Pupils say this helped them to improve their work.

The school has begun to develop a more creative approach to the curriculum by linking across subjects. Teachers' growing confidence in their subject expertise and understanding of pupils' learning is underpinning these developments.

Progress since the last visit on areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning, raising expectations and making sure pupils' work is challenging and matched consistently to their different starting points and capabilities - good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The continued strong leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team has led to improvements in middle leaders' capabilities. As a result, curriculum teams have begun to take on a leadership role, which they are relishing. This is evident in the growing expertise and confidence of the teams. Teachers now have a powerful shared vision of how to develop the school. They are enthusiastic in the developments they have made and in the changes they are bringing in. Both curriculum teams have appropriate and well considered action plans. These are based on a secure knowledge of their subjects and the school, gained in a variety of ways. Teams look at pupils' work and listen to their views on learning and on what they have enjoyed. They have all had paired lesson observations, followed by a discussion on what they have observed of pupils' learning. Weaknesses in learning have been identified and the teams have considered ways to remedy them. There is now a confidence and enthusiasm in sharing planning and ideas.

The parents spoken with are overwhelmingly positive about the changes in the school's ethos and their children's education. The school is now regularly communicating with them. A parent/teacher organisation has started and there is a recently formed parents' council. One parent remarked on how useful it was to have text messages from school as a reminder for events. They all said that they felt included in their child's education.

The interim executive board continues to have a close and effective role within the school. They are well informed and hold the school successfully to account.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of collective leadership and management, which includes senior staff and governors, ensuring a more rigorous approach to monitoring and more effective tracking of pupils' progress; using



assessment information rigorously to identify and eliminate the causes of underachievement - good

- ensure a more equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities among senior staff and evaluate the impact of their work more effectively, in relation to raising achievement - good.

External support

The LA continues to provide high quality support to the school on a wide range of issues. It must now consider how this can be sensibly reduced as the school develops the capacity to sustain improvement.

Priorities for further improvement

- To improve the learning of all pupils by ensuring their greater participation and involvement in whole-class activities.