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24 March 2011

Mr Dent
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
Whitehouse Road
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DN11 8EF

Dear Mr Dent

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 to 23 March 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. 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

The school can appoint one Newly Qualified Teacher.

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2009

- Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - raising pupils' attainment and improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who exceed their age related levels in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the majority of teaching is good or better and, as a matter of urgency, ensuring that all inadequate teaching is eliminated
 - ensuring that all teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and the small steps which build on pupils' levels of skills and knowledge, are planned carefully
 - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of the more able pupils and their work is carefully matched to their capabilities so that they receive sufficient challenge
 - improving the quality of the academic guidance given to pupils.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the work of the school more rigorously to: identify clearly the priorities for improvement; set challenging targets; monitor the progress made by all groups of pupils and hold staff to account for pupils' progress.

- Ensure that the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets statutory requirements.

Special measures: monitoring of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 22-23 March 2011

Evidence

The Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with groups of pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the deputy headteacher has commenced maternity leave. The teacher responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage has become the acting deputy headteacher. The teacher with responsibility for special educational needs and/or disabilities, has also joined the senior leadership team.

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

Since the last visit there is further evidence of better progress in most year groups. The school's improved tracking of pupil progress indicates that a much higher proportion of pupils will attain at the nationally expected levels at both Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2011. The Early Years Foundation Stage is going from strength to strength. Children in this phase are making good progress in terms of all the areas of learning because of high quality teaching in an increasingly stimulating learning environment.

Pupils' reading is improving as a result of the more systematic approach that is being adopted to the teaching of this aspect. There are promising signs that the new intervention programmes are enhancing the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Progress is improving in mathematics as a result of the increased opportunities pupils have to apply their mathematical thinking in problem-solving situation in other subjects of the curriculum. However, pupils experience too many lessons in which they do not make good progress. The progress of more able pupils is largely satisfactory but at times it is limited because they are not allowed to take enough responsibility for their own learning.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Raise pupils' achievement by raising pupils' attainment and improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2 and for more able pupils – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour continues to improve so that it rarely interferes with learning. Attendance continues to be close to the national average and strengths in the school's care,

support and guidance have reduced the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Members of the school council are more confident in giving their views. The school continues to use its own community well to promote cultural awareness.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching and the use of assessment continue to improve largely because higher expectations are becoming more established in the school. Pupils are working harder in lessons and have greater opportunity to make choices that allows them to focus on more challenging learning, particularly in mathematics. Teachers often take advantage of the presence of high levels of adult support and increase expectations further.

Questioning is now better with more examples of strategies that ensure more pupils think about key ideas. There is less reliance on willing volunteers and more questions are targeted at pupils of different abilities. However, in a minority of lessons, opportunities are missed to increase the level of challenge by asking questions that require pupils to think at a higher level. Pupils made most progress where they could take responsibility for their own learning. For instance Year 6 pupils used 'learning ladders' to identify challenging outcomes that aided them in producing highly persuasive arguments in letters of complaint about inappropriate use of motorcycles near to the school. Although planning has improved, the work identified for the more able is not always at a sufficiently high level.

Marking by teachers is thorough and identifies pupils' achievements and what must be improved. However, pupils generally are not sufficiently involved in identifying the levels they are at and what they must do to reach the next level. The curriculum is contributing more to pupils' better progress. Pupils were particularly enthusiastic about the mathematics work on rationing, linked to their Second World War history topic.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that the majority of teaching is good or better and, as a matter of urgency, ensuring that all inadequate teaching is eliminated – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are improving more rapidly. There is much more evidence that the school's senior leaders are taking effective responsibility for school improvement. A greater range of senior leaders are involved in evaluating the work of the school and there is evidence that they are more prepared to make critical judgements. For instance, in identifying where in the school pupils are making less

progress and the reasons for this. Greater determination is now evident in the schools plans to bring about improvement. The school has managed the changes in staffing well. There is greater clarity about the priorities for improvement as reflected in the schools largely accurate self-evaluation. Effective steps have been taken to ensure the greater involvement of a range of partners in the self-review process. Work with partner schools is improving the confidence of leaders and is aiding the development of a more comprehensive overview.

More governors are becoming involved in the life of the school and have perceptive insights into the strengths and weaknesses. Although there are growing strengths in how assessment information is used to adapt provision, the school recognises that in some year groups assessment information is not yet sufficiently reliable. The Early Years Foundation Stage is now a major strength of the school. The new teaching assistant, under the very effective leadership of the acting deputy headteacher, is making a strong contribution to the improvements in this phase.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the work of the school more rigorously and ensure that the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets statutory requirements -good.

External support

The impact of the external support is good. Particularly effective arrangements are in place to plan and monitor the effectiveness of the support provided. The school improvement partner (SIP) continues to provide just the right level of challenge and support that allows the school to demonstrate the extent it is developing its capacity for sustained improvement. The support provided by the Early Years Foundation Stage adviser has been particularly effective in contributing to improvements in this phase. Local Authority support has also resulted in the introduction of promising intervention strategies, particularly for pupils who are not making enough progress.