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Mr Trevor Smith
Headteacher
Chapel-en-le-Frith CofE VC Primary School
Warmbrook Road
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High Peak
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Dear Mr Smith

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chapel-en-le-Frith CofE VC Primary School

Following my visit with Rosemary Barnfield, Additional Inspector, to your school on 7–8 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 24–25 October 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better across the school by:
 - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons that are carefully matched to pupils' learning needs
 - providing more challenge in lessons and through marking for all pupils, and particularly those who are more able
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to develop their independent learning skills and perseverance by solving complex problems
 - ensuring that each lesson builds on what pupils already know and understand.

- Raise achievement for all pupils, especially in reading and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - pupils respond to teachers' marking by correcting and improving their work
 - teachers demonstrate higher expectations by providing harder work for pupils and insisting that they work to a high standard
 - pupils are provided with reading books that are better matched to their ability levels
 - all pupils develop good skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation to build on their good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making full use of all available performance information to give leaders and governors a detailed and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - setting precise targets focused on raising pupils' achievement in the school development plan
 - developing the curriculum to ensure that teachers understand how pupils can improve their literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons and provide regular opportunities for them to do so
 - taking immediate action to tackle underachievement and close gaps in pupils' learning.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 7–8 May 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a local authority representative. Inspectors spoke to parents and pupils. Inspectors observed 17 lessons, seven jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Pupils' books were scrutinised. The single central record was checked.

Context

The headteacher has resigned. He is leaving the school at the end of the current school year.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' achievement is improving. Pupils across the school are making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, rates of progress are inconsistent across Key Stages 1 and 2. School data show that progress is accelerating at a faster rate in Year 2, Year 6 and Year 5. The increased rates of progress seen across the school are a consequence of improvements in the quality of teaching.

Teachers' assessments carried out in Year 2 and Year 6 show that pupils' attainment in mathematics, reading, and writing is rising. More pupils are achieving standards closer to those expected for their age. An increasing number of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to achieve standards in line with those seen nationally in 2013, and a growing number are achieving standards higher than those expected for their age. These improvements are as a direct result of teachers' and senior leaders' increased expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Standards in reading are rising as pupils can now access more challenging books. In most classes, progress in reading is good, apart from in Year 4, where pupils are making expected progress. In mathematics, most groups of pupils are making good progress. There are no significant differences between the progress of girls and boys in any subject in most year groups, although boys in Year 6 are making better progress than girls in mathematics and writing.

The most-able pupils are making progress in line with other pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making progress in line with their peers. Those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs are also making progress in line with their peers, particularly in mathematics. There are some

differences in the progress of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, with some pupils making better progress than others in some subjects and year groups.

Although progress is accelerating and standards are rising, there is still a gap between pupils' attainment and the standards expected for their age. Not enough pupils across the school are reaching the standards they should in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this gap is closing steadily.

The school's predictions for the standards children should reach in mathematics, literacy and communication and language at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are below those reached nationally in 2013. However, children in this key stage are making progress in line with expectations.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved and it is better than at the last section 5 inspection. This is having a positive impact on the progress pupils are making in their learning. Some elements of weaker teaching remain and these weaknesses are the cause of the inconsistent progress pupils make. School leaders are addressing these weaknesses systematically through training and support.

The teaching of reading is better organised, and teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, they plan work that is largely better matched to the different capabilities of the pupils. The books pupils read are more challenging. Improved targets that focus more precisely on what pupils need to learn next mean rates of progress are increasing. Pupils say they enjoy the new books they read and say they are more challenging.

In the best teaching, the tasks pupils undertake are well matched to their abilities. For example, in a Year 5 class, the most-able pupils had a series of complex questions to answer that challenged their use of vocabulary. The less able were also working on a similar task, but with sentences and vocabulary that were appropriate to their abilities. Consequently, all groups made good progress. Teachers' skilful questions develop pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. Where teaching is less effective, the tasks pupils complete are similar for all groups. Teachers' questions find out what pupils know rather than what they need to learn, and this inhibits the progress they make. This is particularly the case for the most-able pupils, who are not challenged sufficiently well to make the progress of which they are capable.

The work of teaching assistants is most effective when they are engaged working with different groups of pupils. For example, in a Year 6 reading lesson, the teaching assistant skilfully questioned the pupils and supported them to develop their understanding of the text. However, inspectors observed that, in a number of

lessons, while the teacher was addressing the whole class, teaching assistants sat and waited rather than supporting pupils. This meant that there were lost opportunities for pupils to receive timely support to deepen their understanding.

Marking has improved. Teachers follow the new marking policy. There is a more consistent approach to how teachers tell pupils how well they are doing. Pupils regularly respond to marking through a written reply in their books. However, teachers' developmental comments are not as well used in some classes as in others. Some teachers do not expect pupils to correct or improve their work immediately and so opportunities for further progress in learning are lost.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with many opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, teaching does not have a clear enough focus on what different groups of children need to do in order to make better progress. Opportunities to challenge children to deepen their thinking are missed because teachers do not use their knowledge of children's achievements well enough to precisely match tasks to their capabilities and interests.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour around school and in classrooms is respectful and courteous. Where teaching has improved, pupils' attitudes to learning have improved as well. Pupils are now better focused on their learning because teachers challenge them to think more carefully.

Relationships between adults and pupils are caring and supportive. During the inspection, inspectors saw many examples of cooperation and support between different groups of pupils. They were often seen helping each other learn, discussing the tasks they were completing, and encouraging one another to behave well.

Attendance is consistently high.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

School leaders have begun to improve the quality of teaching and this has ensured that pupils are making better progress. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are determined to bring about the improvements necessary to improve outcomes for all pupils. Weaker teaching is being dealt with through the focused use of training and support. Leaders set clear expectations for change and regularly check to see whether teachers have responded quickly to improve their work. The role of governors is clearly identified within the school's plans, and their work in checking the work of senior leaders is much improved.

Leaders' targets for increased progress in learning are ambitious. Closing the gap in the standards pupils reach in mathematics, reading, and writing is a priority. The systems for checking the work of the school have improved and school leaders better understand how different groups of pupils are progressing. They use data appropriately to challenge teachers where progress is too slow.

The subject leaders for mathematics and English make a strong contribution to school improvement work. They have gained an in-depth knowledge of how well their subjects are being taught through speaking to pupils, checking pupils' books and observing teaching. They use the information they have about pupils' learning to challenge their colleagues to improve their work. Their work supports that of senior leaders. It has contributed significantly to the progress the school is making.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage needs to improve. Leaders are not focused sufficiently well on meeting the specific learning needs of different groups of pupils and opportunities for accelerating progress are frequently missed.

Since the previous monitoring visit, the governing body has acted quickly to address the areas for improvement identified in the external review of governance. It has reorganised itself to focus on the key issues from the section 5 inspection. Governors regularly check the work of senior leaders through visits to school and have first-hand knowledge of the impact of leaders' work. They regularly challenge leaders about the progress of pupils. Governors have a much clearer understanding of how well their school is doing in relation to national data for pupils' progress.

External support

The local authority has provided timely and effective support. This support has been key to the improvements made since the section 5 inspection. It has provided a consultant to support the work of subject leaders to improve their effectiveness in managing their subjects. It has also provided training for all staff to improve the quality of teaching. It has also supported school leaders to develop their skills in checking the quality of teaching and in scrutinising pupils' work.

Further priority for improvement

- Ensure that leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is better focused on the progress of different groups of pupils so that the individual learning needs of all children are fully met through well-planned activities that engage children's interests.