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Mrs Denise McClellan
Acting Headteacher
Wingrave Church of England Combined School
Twelve Leys
Wingrave
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HP22 4QG

Dear Mrs McClellan

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Wingrave Church of England Combined School

Following my visit to your school on 24 and 25 March 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in February 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.

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, the Divisional Manager for School Improvement at Buckinghamshire Council, and the Diocese of Oxford.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Close
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Wingrave Church of England Combined School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 March 2009

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work; scrutinised documents; and spoke to the acting headteacher, the substantive headteacher appointed to take up post in April, groups of pupils, parents, the chair and vice-chair of governors, a representative from the local authority, and teachers.

Context

The acting headteacher is due to leave the school at the end of this term, following which the substantive headteacher will take up her post.

Achievement and standards

Since the last visit, pupils have made improved progress and are closer to meeting their targets. Their standards are rising. The deficit is being made up by a careful focus on individual Year 5 children who had made slow progress in previous years. High-attaining pupils are making greater progress but some could do even better. The school's data show that pupils in Key Stage 1 are on track to meet suitably challenging targets. This represents an improvement, with Year 2 pupils having caught up with the shortfall in Year 1.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards and increase the progress made in lessons, especially in Years 3 to 6 – good

Personal development and well-being

Pupils enjoy lessons but would like some more interactive activities. They are well behaved, work hard and get on well with each other. During lunchtime they would welcome more activities and play equipment. They say they want more opportunity to take responsibility and contribute to making decisions, such as through the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are improving. More lessons include different work that meets the needs of each group within the class. This is helping pupils to make better progress in lessons, although the highest attainers are sometimes not challenged enough. In English and mathematics, teachers' plans match each group's work to appropriate levels within the National Curriculum. Lessons are characterised by very good relations between staff and pupils. Staff know the pupils well. They plan

appropriate interventions for those who need extra help or challenge. However, they have not always evaluated in sufficient detail how effective the interventions have been, to identify the factors that have led to improvement and others that might be improved upon. This term, support staff have been more effectively deployed to meet needs. Joint working between teachers and support staff is reflected in improved planning and assessment. Staff have correctly identified a need for more integrated work to share and build on the good practice that is developing.

There is increased use of practical science lessons focused on scientific enquiry, following training from the local authority. Teachers are also improving pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics. They are selecting some good activities that encourage pupils to think, although sometimes they are not delivered effectively enough to provide the intended challenge or to match the aims of the lesson. Displays are more vibrant and interactive, although they do not consistently engage pupils in work across the core subjects.

Marking has improved, with good practice seen, although there remain inconsistencies. A particular strength is the use of 'green pen' work where pupils respond to the tasks or corrections that teachers set and teachers then check this. Self-assessment has also improved, and is developing in different ways across the school. It is most successful where pupils have specific criteria against which to assess their work. Pupils enjoy making self-assessments and see them as helpful in letting their teachers know where they might be stuck, but sometimes they make assessments without clear enough success criteria. Self-assessment is generally focused on the learning within a single lesson. There is room for pupils to take more responsibility for their learning in assessing their progress more broadly against the National Curriculum.

Parents find the personal and class targets in English and mathematics helpful and pupils like them, although they do not always remember their class targets. Teachers assess when targets have been met, and pupils are increasingly involved in noting where they have shown evidence of meeting a target within the subject or in other subjects, such as religious education (RE). Targets have become more applicable across the whole of the subject so evidence can be provided in more lessons. Nevertheless, some pupils have stayed with the same target for a long time. There is no central record of progress through targets and some variation in the style of target. Science assessments have been introduced and more training on them is planned, but pupils do not have targets in science. No ongoing assessment is made of pupils' levels in information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils know the National Curriculum level they are working at but are not clear about all they need to do to get to the next level. Tracking sets targets for progress through an appropriate number of levels in English and mathematics. Teachers are improving at judging levels and interpreting progress, although this is conveyed to parents in different formats for different classes. Pupil-progress meetings have helped teachers to judge progress since the previous term and to identify where

intervention is needed or no longer required. The meetings focus on English and mathematics and do not include science.

Teachers have benefited from the feedback from a number of lesson observations. This has not only improved teaching quality, but has also enhanced teachers' evaluation of their own lessons. Their ability to identify how to improve augurs well for continued improvement.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that teachers set suitably challenging tasks matched to pupils' needs – good
- use information on pupils' academic progress more effectively to improve teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6 – good

Leadership and management

Since the last visit, governors have collected more first-hand evidence, which they have used effectively to contribute to their careful monitoring of progress on each element within the school's action plan. They have participated with the acting headteacher and local authority in this evaluation.

The English and mathematics coordinators have developed a more strategic role in leading their subjects. Through their monitoring, they have built up a fuller understanding of the strengths and areas for development. This has helped them to identify how to improve provision, and to recognise the need for greater consistency, such as in tracking the improvements in teaching. Input from the local authority, including joint lesson observations, has contributed to improved coordination of science. There are also developments in the management of ICT and RE, but fewer in other subjects.

The acting headteacher has provided excellent leadership and management over the last year. She has enabled the middle managers and staff to increase their capacity and become more effective. In this way, and through putting effective systems in place, she has established secure foundations for the transition to the leadership of the substantive headteacher. The staff have worked together well and put real energy and dedication into successfully improving the school.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that leaders and managers at all levels are aware of and carry out their roles and responsibilities, particularly in raising standards, effectively – good

External support

Since the last visit, the local authority has worked well with the acting headteacher to plan the support for this term to target it where needed. It has been clearly quantified with intended outcomes, which has helped the acting headteacher and

governors to evaluate its impact. The support has made a notable difference in the quality of teaching, assessment, leadership, management and science provision. The local authority has appropriate plans in place to support the transition to the substantive headteacher.