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30 March 2009

Mrs Melanie Clapton
Interim Headteacher
Chadwell St Mary Primary School
River View
Chadwell St Mary
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RM16 4DH

Dear Mrs Clapton

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Chadwell St Mary
Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 and 18 March 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in July 2007. 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*

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Thurrock.

Yours sincerely
George Falconer

Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Chadwell St Mary Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 March 2009

Evidence

HMI observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, pupils and the chair of the interim executive board. Lessons were observed in all classes.

Context

External support has become more robust with the leadership and management of the school making positive and pro-active decisions to link with local schools for additional support in the form of advice, collaborative learning and peer coaching. The school is also receiving the benefit of an external assessment for learning consultant.

Achievement and standards

Improvements have been made to pupils' progress in learning but the impact is yet to be seen in improved standards across the subjects. The school data for the current period provides firm evidence of many pupils making satisfactory progress with a good proportion making accelerated progress in learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Some year groups show better progress than others. In Year 1, for example, the vast majority of pupils are making the expected progress or better, with a very good percentage of them showing accelerated progress in learning. Writing is still an issue across the school. Similar patterns exist within other year groups. However, this is inconsistent across subjects. Year 3 data shows that just under half of the pupils are making satisfactory progress in mathematics while in Year 4, just over half of the pupils are making the satisfactory progress, with a good proportion showing accelerated progress. In Year 5, progress in writing is not satisfactory for the majority of pupils and in Year 6 less than half of the pupils are making the required progress in mathematics. These pupils are still making up ground due to inadequate teaching and learning in the past. However, there are good percentages of pupils making accelerated progress in their learning across the school. This is as a result of more strategic thinking at the senior leadership level, analytical and focused actions linked more closely to monitoring of pupil performance, teaching and the quality of the curriculum.

First hand observations in lessons indicate a mixed picture of satisfactory to good progress. This is very much dependent on a variety of factors including the starting points of the individual pupils, the quality of teaching and learning in helping them to progress in their understanding and to what degree the curriculum is planned to generate interest and enthusiasm.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science and accelerate the progress pupils make – inadequate in raising standards but progress in learning is satisfactory overall with many pupils making accelerated progress.

Personal development and well-being

Personal development and well-being continue to be areas of strength in this school where pupils are happy and appreciative of the amount of time and effort that adults give to them. Attitudes to learning vary but are generally good where the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils' perceptions of school as a whole are positive for the majority of pupils who say they like coming to school, enjoy their lessons and enjoy their friendships with other pupils. Attitudes to adults in school are good for the vast majority of pupils. Pupils are taught to behave in a considerate manner and to respect each other. They adopt safe practices and are learning about how to lead healthy lifestyles. They make a positive contribution to their own community within school and partake in charitable events. Community links are developing well with the school recently and successfully celebrating its 95th birthday and making the links back to the pupils of the past, including pupils from as far back as the 1920s. The school recognises that there is more work to do before they have a fully developed programme of community cohesion but they are not short of ideas. They are currently focusing on the key issues for improvement.

In terms of preparation for the next stage of their lives, older pupils are developing a strong sense of their own needs and how to meet those needs. With progress in learning for many being at least satisfactory or accelerating, preparation for the future economic well being is satisfactory. Attendance figures are still well below average and impede the quality of learning for a minority of pupils who would benefit greatly by attending regularly. This is not for the want of trying by the school which uses many approaches aimed at encouraging parents to ensure their children attend more regularly.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve pupils' attendance - *inadequate*

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning is improving through the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the environment has been further developed. It is now much more conducive to a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activity. The indoor and the outdoor curriculum are developing well and children now have better and increased opportunities for free flow activity and therefore greater choice in terms of areas of learning. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and is satisfactory but with good elements including the increased levels of understanding of children's differing needs and how to meet those needs. The 'bear hunt' was an exciting event for them and the pet shop keepers were being very entrepreneurial with their mathematics and enjoying the element of role play. Assessment for learning is now more developed but with the school understanding that there is still room for improvement, particularly in the recording of children's progress and how to share that knowledge more widely. Children have good access to a varied curriculum and good levels of support from teaching assistants. The level of enjoyment through play and learning is good and children are keen to share their new found knowledge.

The quality of provision in the school as a whole is improving as a result of the leadership and management taking an increasingly strategic perspective on the teaching and learning and the curriculum on offer. Senior leaders have worked hard on this important area of their work and have taken advice from a range of external consultants when appropriate. The school realises that it has to focus particularly on writing.

The quality of teaching and learning is therefore improving with no inadequate lessons observed. Lessons ranged from satisfactory to outstanding with the satisfactory lessons having elements of good practice in them, such as the planning and the preparation, as well as the very good use of teaching assistants and resources. In these lessons, assessment for learning is used satisfactorily and pupils generally made satisfactory progress but with some making good progress. Where a minority of pupils find it difficult to concentrate, some misbehaviour occurs and this is enough to distract the teacher and other class members where it happens frequently throughout a lesson. Behaviour management tactics used are effective for a while but sometimes need to be repeated to get pupils to settle to their work.

An outstanding lesson observed was planned meticulously, extremely well resourced and delivered in such a way as to progress the pupils learning rapidly. Levels of understanding were high, as were the levels of engagement from all pupils. Teacher-pupil interaction was extremely productive and a good sense of humour prevailed in an environment that was safe and conducive to good quality learning. There was a

good quota of co-operation and support among the pupils plus an eagerness to succeed. The pace was good and the teaching was of high quality. The teaching assistant gave extremely good support to the whole episode. The outcome resulted in very good levels of understanding of working scientifically and of knowledge of materials as insulators. Just as important, the teaching also encouraged the use of numeracy and literacy while progressing pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants are a valuable asset in this school. They are keen and enthusiastic, know their roles well and have the respect of the pupils.

Resources are now more abundant than was previously the case. For example, a new science scheme has been introduced and is proving to be successful. Pupils are now set by ability in subjects such as mathematics so that the work can be more easily matched to their needs.

The school keeps a watchful eye on progress being made and is now adept at introducing well thought out intervention strategies to meet the changing needs of both individuals and groups of pupils. Assessment for learning is improving with staff now very much aware of its importance in gauging progress made. Pupils from different groups, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, receive appropriate provision and support. The quality of care is good. Academic guidance and support for the pupils is satisfactory but improving as staffing becomes more stable and the degree of understanding of the importance of assessment for learning is understood and practised by all staff effectively.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the provision in the Foundation Stage - *satisfactory*

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management of the interim headteacher and seconded deputy headteacher is robust and continually developing. The headteacher is strategic, hard working and has a good sense of realism. She balances the needs of the school and the needs of the pupils well, working closely with the senior management team who are, in turn, quickly developing their understanding of being leaders and managers. The middle leadership team are much more focused on the key issues and are keen to develop their roles by giving enhanced levels of support to both the curriculum provision and the teaching and learning. Much more information is shared, as are the differing sets of expertise. Further links with other schools are now developing well. Teaching resources and peer coaching are shared and have been added to the resource base of the school. They are used appropriately to support and enhance the overall quality of the provision.

The chair of the interim executive board works enthusiastically and diligently towards obtaining the best outcomes for the pupils and staff of the school. He also provides the appropriate amount of support and challenge for the headteacher and

is often a visitor to the school in order to gauge the quality of current progress. He is keen to generate support for the school and feels just as comfortable in the playground chatting to pupils and parents as he does in the board room.

Staff are highly motivated in terms of the focus of the school and they are keen to support the leadership and management. They now have the feel of a more cohesive staff that is working in the same direction and to the same ends. The inclusive nature of the school permeates the work of all, including the administrative staff who do much to support pupils, parents and staff.

The quality of self evaluation is good and the senior management team have a good understanding of the direction the school needs to take in both the short and the long term in order for the school to be successful. They also realise that time is of the essence and that more needs to be accomplished before standards are more acceptable for all pupils.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management of the headteacher, senior teachers and the governing body – *satisfactory*
- Stabilise staffing and improve the quality of teaching, ensuring that assessment information is used effectively – *satisfactory*

External support

The quality of external support continues to be robust and focused on the priorities for improvement. The regular supportive visits of the principal officer for pupil achievement are well received. They help the school to be reflective in terms of the progress made as a result of actions taken as well as being able to see the areas that still require improvement. The local authority also offers good advice and gives good support from the review meetings. External support from other schools is growing as healthy and purposeful relationships develop in the form of shared teaching expertise and consultation.

Priorities for further improvement

- Develop teaching and learning to impact increasingly on accelerated progress in all year groups in order to raise standards, particularly in writing.
- Develop further strategies to increase attendance by continuing to broaden the partnership with all parents.