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Mrs Heather Good
Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School
Liddymore Road
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Dear Mrs Good

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School

Following my visit to your school on 26 November 2009, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 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 not 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 Director of Children's Services for Somerset, the Director of Education of the Diocese of Bath and Wells and the Assistant Education Secretary, Methodist Church Schools.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 26 November 2009

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher and other staff, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and the local authority school improvement adviser.

Context

The assistant headteacher retired at the end of August 2009 as planned. An acting assistant headteacher is in place for the current school year. A senior member of staff is on maternity leave and a temporary teacher has taken over her class. The planned reorganisation into six classes has now taken place.

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

The teachers' final assessments of Year 4 at the end of the summer term 2009 confirmed that these pupils had made faster progress than those in Year 4 in 2007/08, although the standards reached were below levels expected nationally. Challenging targets are in place to raise standards to expected levels by the summer of 2010 and the school's data and inspection evidence indicate that Year 4 pupils are currently making the necessary progress towards these. The accuracy of the teachers' assessments has improved significantly and there are high expectations of the progress to be made by pupils throughout the school. Much effort has been put into addressing earlier gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' progress is thoroughly and regularly checked in detailed discussions between the acting headteacher and the class teachers. Pupils know their targets and, in discussions with the inspector, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 were confident that these, with the support provided by their teachers, are helping them to do better.

At the end of Year 2 in the summer of 2009, standards dipped below average. This group joined the school with skills that were weaker than usual, particularly in writing. Although pupils' progress accelerated during Year 2, the school's efforts were unable to compensate fully for this lower starting point. The school's assessments indicate that pupils currently in Year 2 are set to reach broadly average standards by the summer of 2010.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve pupils' standards, particularly in numeracy in Years 3 and 4
– good



Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' personal development and well-being remain strengths of the school. Behaviour is good and pupils get on well together. They enjoy their lessons and concentrate well. Pupils show good capacity to work independently and in small groups and are increasingly able to reflect on how well they are doing. They are pleased with the greater opportunity to contribute to the life of the school through the school and eco councils. School council members have recently undertaken a walk round the classrooms where they had the opportunity to note how helpfully pupils' targets were displayed. Members have also suggested a 'member of staff of the week' award which is soon to be established.

The effectiveness of provision

Teachers remain very positive and keen to develop their practice. They have continued to receive practical and sharply focused support from local authority consultants, particularly for literacy and numeracy. This has included advice and support for individual teachers as well as contributions to staff meetings and training. The acting assistant headteacher's role includes supporting the development of teaching and learning and this is making a positive contribution to improvement. The programme of lesson observations carried out by the acting headteacher, joined on occasion by the local authority school improvement adviser, identifies clearly both strengthening practice and areas for improvement. Teachers respond well, reflect effectively on their own teaching and are keen to tackle any weaknesses and to work together as a team.

The school's data show that teaching has continued to improve and, in most classroom observations this term, it has been judged good. Inspection evidence confirms this improving picture. Good features observed included a sharp focus on what pupils are intended to learn and appropriate attention to addressing weaknesses previously identified in pupils' understanding. Lessons were carefully planned and this included setting out clearly the role of teaching and learning assistants. Much useful information on pupils' responses to activities is collected by these staff and passed to the teacher. Aspects on which to focus to secure further improvement include ensuring the pace of learning is brisk and giving enough attention to consolidating pupils' understanding in the closing part of a lesson.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3 and 4 – good



The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher continues to provide effective leadership, guided by clear plans that are based on rigorous and accurate self-evaluation. The detailed action plan to address the issues identified at the last inspection continues to be a working document that guides the school's progress well. It is a mark of the good progress the school is making that there is now also a school improvement plan which sets out other appropriate areas for development that the school has identified for itself. In due course, these two plans could be merged into a single document.

Good progress has been made in developing leadership in depth in the school. The senior leadership team is now well established and playing a growing role in monitoring the school's progress. Other staff are becoming increasingly involved in this work as subject leaders now have appropriate plans for their subject and have identified opportunities to check planning, sample pupils' work and visit classrooms. A clear monitoring and evaluation policy guides this work.

The governing body has undertaken further training on its monitoring role and now has a clear plan for activities to enable it to find out for itself how well the school is doing. The new Curriculum and Standards Committee has established reports from literacy and numeracy governors as standing items at each meeting in future. The governors are moving forward with the necessary arrangements to appoint a permanent headteacher for the start of the next school year in September 2010.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of strategic planning to focus rigorously on rapidly improving pupils' progress – good

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support. The school improvement adviser joins the acting headteacher to conduct joint lesson observations to help in monitoring improvements in teaching and the governing body is receiving appropriate training as well as practical guidance in appointing a permanent headteacher. Local authority consultants for numeracy, literacy and communication, language and literacy development as well as the Foundation Stage adviser work with the school in a variety of ways to help it to improve.