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Mr Stephen Dent
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mr Dent

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

Following my visit to your school on 23 and 24 March 2010, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

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 Nottinghamshire and the Dioceses of Hallam.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector



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

Report from the first monitoring inspection 23-24 March 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited 8 lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, teachers, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last inspection, pupils in Year 1 are no longer taught alongside children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Year 1 pupils are now taught with Year 2 pupils in a Key Stage 1 Class. The teacher who taught lower Key Stage 2 pupils has left. This class is now taught by two part-time teachers.

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

Pupils are making improved progress in all year groups. Effective interventions, usually involving teaching assistants, continue to ensure pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or learning difficulties progress more rapidly than other pupils. The improved progress was most apparent amongst lower attaining pupils because teachers are identifying the small steps these pupils must take to attain appropriate outcomes. In the lessons seen more able pupils did less well because not enough emphasis was given to the outcomes for these pupils. Pupils are making better progress in writing and mathematics than in reading because this latter aspect has only recently been made a priority. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy the introductions to lessons because of the interesting scenarios used to stimulate learning. For instance, pupils became very excited about their investigations when a real policeman attended a simulated crime scene in the school. However, generally opportunities are missed to reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through the full range of subjects.

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

There is evidence that attainment is improving so pupils are better prepared for the next stage in their learning. Pupils adopt safe practices for instance in using some of the outdoor play equipment. Pupils' behaviour in most year groups is good although



younger Key Stage 2 pupils are rather too easily distracted from their learning. Pupils appreciate the much more regular opportunities they are now getting to positively contribute through participation in school council meetings.

The effectiveness of provision

Inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Planning has improved so there is greater clarity about the learning outcomes for most pupils. Activities are identified for different ability groups in lessons and teaching assistants are well deployed to enable lower attaining pupils to make better progress. The quality of teaching is improving as a result of a greater focus on individual targets. Pupils' understanding of their targets is also reinforced through the interactive displays that celebrate the progress pupils make. Some staff are beginning to increase pupils' awareness of how learning in lessons is connected to their targets. However not enough attention is given to ensuring pupils, particularly the most able, understand what they must do to really excel. More able pupils do not have enough opportunity to work independently and teachers' questioning does not encourage enough high-order thinking, particularly related to how learning is applied.

The beginnings of lessons were quite effective. Generally teachers avoided over long introductions in order to ensure pupils were actively involved. In a lesson at Key Stage 1 middle and lower attaining pupils were expertly guided so they could work with great endeavour on their activities related to classifying shapes. There were some good examples of teachers using information and communication technology to promote learning. For instance, this medium was used well in encouraging pupils to write about the life of a pirate. In the best practice seen, teachers used timely interventions to highlight good practice and to clarify what pupils of all abilities needed to do to be successful. Teachers stated which pupils did well and explained precisely why praise had been given. This is contributing to improved levels of pupil engagement in lessons. However, lessons were also observed in which pupils received praise even where they showed relatively little effort. In some lessons pupils did not work hard enough. Pupils are usefully involved in providing feedback on how confident they feel about the concepts being taught. Nevertheless, lesson endings are a relative weakness because pupils, particularly the more able do not have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their learning.

Marking is identifying many of the improvements pupils need to make, although this feedback is not consistently linked to pupils' targets. The school is taking steps to ensure pupils have the opportunity to respond to teachers' feedback. More effective interventions are taking place in response to the school's evidence that some pupils are learning below age-related expectations. The school has plans in place to improve the extent different subjects contribute to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

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

The school has a clearer set of priorities linked to the key issues identified at the inspection and challenging targets have been adopted. More dependable evidence about the progress all pupils are making is being developed. The school is sensibly using a range of ways of assessing pupils, whilst taking steps to enhance teacher assessment. This improvement is increasing the schools ability to ensure equal opportunities. Teachers are being held to account for the progress their pupils make, through frequent and regular meetings. In turn, governors are more actively holding the school to account. There is evidence that governors are becoming a critical friend through their well focussed termly monitoring meetings. For instance, governors have rightly discussed whether the school has the leadership capacity needed to make the necessary improvements.

The school has a reasonably accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning although there is limited evidence that the school is tailoring its priorities to reflect the outcomes of its monitoring and evaluation. The school is not yet analysing the full range of evaluative evidence, for instance the quality of teachers' planning has not received sufficient attention. The school has ensured that it meets the statutory requirements as regards the presence of a qualified teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In this phase, the school has identified the need to further improve the quality of the learning environment and the use of data so the progress children make can be better evaluated.

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 - satisfactory.

External support

The impact of the external support provided for the school has been good. The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose and the actions it contains have had a beneficial impact on the school. The support provided by the literacy and numeracy



consultant has been highly valued by the school. The strong links made between this support and pupils' individual targets has been instrumental in ensuring the school's progress. The support provided by another local catholic primary school has increased the confidence of leaders and is highly appreciated by the school. The support is complemented well by the challenge the school has received from the school's adviser and School Improvement Partner.