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19 December 2013

Mr Robert Cochrane
The Principal
Rosherville Church of England Primary School
London Road
Northfleet
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Kent
DA11 9JQ

Dear Mr Cochrane

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Rosherville Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 and 18 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2012. 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 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 the Governing Body, the diocese and the Director of Children's Services for Kent.

Yours sincerely

David Scott
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Accelerate pupils' progress and improve the quality of their writing by January 2013, by:
 - ensuring pupils make good use of their writing skills when learning across the curriculum
 - making sure that pupils fully understand their next steps for learning so that they increase their interest in, and responsibility for, improving their work.
- Strengthen teaching, so that more of it is good or better and leads to accelerated learning, by January 2013, through:
 - using assessment information to match work more closely to pupils' differing needs and ensuring expectations for what pupils should and can achieve in a lesson are high enough
 - making sure that teachers' marking focuses on what pupils need to improve next and is followed up straight away.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including middle managers and leaders, by September 2012, by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching more rigorously and giving precise guidance about what needs improving
 - making sharper use of data to check the progress of different groups of pupils such as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

Special measures: monitoring of Rosherville Church of England Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 17–18 December 2013

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, spoke to pupils and met with the Principal, Vice Principal, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from Lilac Sky Schools, the company who provides leadership for the school. A telephone discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, a number of staff changes have taken place. Two newly qualified teachers (NQTs) joined the school in September 2013, two of whom were trained overseas. Two middle leaders have been appointed to take responsibility for literacy and numeracy; one teaching assistant left in July and another joined in September; and two parent governors have recently been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The unvalidated results of the 2013 Key Stage 2 assessments indicate that the proportion of pupils attaining nationally expected levels in reading and writing were below the national average, although those in mathematics were broadly average. However, since September, the work seen in lessons, pupils' books and the school's accurate analysis of pupils' achievement information indicate that the proportion of pupils making steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics is beginning to accelerate. Since the previous monitoring visit, Year 6 pupils have made good progress in their reading, and are making faster progress than their peers nationally. Across the school, progress in reading is also improving more rapidly. In September, almost half of all pupils in the school were just below their chronological reading age. By November, this had reduced to a quarter and continues to improve. The most able pupils' progress has been notably better than in previous years. Those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are closing the gap with their peers, particularly boys. Pupils who receive the pupil premium funding (those eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent or carer in the armed services) are making faster progress than at the time the school was judged to require special measures, and in some cases their progress is faster than that seen nationally.

Children in Reception settle in well and make steady progress in all areas, particularly in communication and language, and personal, social, emotional development.

Across the school, pupils make stronger progress in mathematics and reading than in writing. Work seen in lessons and books shows that too many pupils still struggle to write with a sense of flow and accuracy. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length, in a range of subjects. Some pupils do not form letters correctly when writing and others have weak spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. In some lessons pupils lack the language skills required to complete the tasks set and are unable to acquire them through practice alone, for example the identification of key points in a piece of prose or the use of formal language where it is the most appropriate. In these cases, pupils need more structured support and direct teaching in aspects of literacy to enable them to achieve the intended goals.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- accelerate pupils' progress and improve the quality of their writing by January 2013 – satisfactory.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is still too variable, and there is not enough that is consistently good to ensure all pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy. This is because almost 100% of teaching staff have changed since the school became subject to requiring special measures, with over 50% joining the school in September 2013. Senior leaders have rightly made improving the quality of teaching their top priority. They, together with the two newly appointed middle leaders, have become adept in swiftly inducting and training new teachers to ensure that the quality of teaching is checked routinely and thoroughly, with targets for improvement being regularly fed back.

In the stronger lessons, teachers have high expectations, clear classroom routines, use question and answer sessions well to check pupils' progress in grasping new skills, and match activities to pupils' interests and previous learning. However, this practice is not consistently applied across the school in all lessons. Relationships are generally positive and teachers treat pupils with respect.

Marking across the school is still too variable. Teachers often miss opportunities, both in lessons and in marking, to emphasise 'small step' feedback to pupils. For example, there was too little evidence during the inspection visit that marking is used to move pupils' learning forward and, as a result, pupils do not always have a clear idea of how to improve quickly. In some pupils' books seen during the inspection, spelling errors were left uncorrected and poor presentation was tolerated in too many cases. Also, when marking had identified areas for improvement these were not followed up to check if pupils had fully understood them and, in several cases, errors persisted for a number of weeks. However, there were a few examples of good practice in peer assessment, talk partners and spelling tests, but these were not shared and promoted consistently across the school.

In the planning of some lessons there was evidence that teachers are beginning to take into account information on pupils' achievement in order to match activities to their needs and enthusiasms. However, this was not consistently seen across the school, with many lessons offering just one activity for a range of abilities and mixed age groups. Senior leaders acknowledge that there is still much work to do to move all teaching to routinely and securely good in order to help pupils make up lost ground and reverse the legacy of underachievement.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- strengthen teaching, so that more of it is good or better and leads to accelerated learning, by January 2013 – satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons and around the school continue to be generally positive and continue to improve. This demonstrates the success of senior leaders' drive to raise expectations and engender a positive work ethic.

In lessons, pupils are generally obedient and compliant, cooperate well, and are respectful of adults and each other. However, they are not always provided with sufficient opportunities to develop the necessary skills to take responsibility for their own learning, and are often too reliant on adults for guidance.

Communication with parents and the wider community has improved dramatically since the Principal and Vice-Principal took up their posts in June 2013. Almost three quarters of parents attended the first parent conference and regular newsletters and the new website ensure that the concerns and wishes of parents are taken seriously and that parents are kept well informed about new developments. Although no submissions to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were received, the inspector scrutinised the school's own recent survey of parents' and carers' views. Here, all parents agreed that their child enjoyed school, behaviour is good, and that the school is a welcoming community where senior leaders are highly visible. Almost all parents agreed that their child is safe and well cared for, makes good progress and that there are good channels of communication with the school.

Improving pupils' attendance is a high priority for the school. Systems for checking pupils' attendance and lateness have been strengthened and regular updates inform staff and parents how well pupils are attending. As a result, attendance has risen by almost one percentage point in the last year and is now above the national average.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

In a very short period of time the Principal and Vice-Principal through their determination and vision for the school have created a welcoming and calm ethos. They have been well supported by staff and, despite a period of uncertainty, the

school has overcome a number staffing difficulties to make day-to-day teaching more stable. Protocols for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching have been strengthened and, as a result, senior leaders are able make accurate judgements and to give precise feedback to teachers about what and how to improve the quality of their practice. Systems and procedures for checking the quality of teaching and holding staff fully to account to improve the quality of teaching have improved but are still at an early stage of development, and further training and support will be needed.

The recently appointed middle leaders for literacy and numeracy have made a good start in addressing pupils' areas of weakness in their areas of responsibility. They have provided whole school training and coaching which have been well received, particularly by NQTs. Whilst improvements can be seen in terms of the quality of teaching and accelerated rates in pupils' progress, overall it is still too early to judge the full impact of their work.

Improved systems for recording and analysing information about pupils' progress are enabling leaders to build up a clear picture of how well different groups achieve in each class. This, in turn, allows leaders to keep a close eye on pupils who show signs of underachievement so that additional support can be planned. This analysis is not routinely extended to all ethnic groups within the school so that all staff are confident in analysing information on pupils in their class.

The governing body has ensured that the leadership of the school is challenged appropriately about its performance and has established a highly productive working relationship with the newly appointed senior and middle leaders. The Chair of the Governing Body meets regularly with the Principal and has a very accurate view of the school's current position and how this compares with similar schools nationally.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including middle managers and leaders, by September 2012 – good.

External support

The school has received helpful support and advice from the local authority's attached adviser. In addition, the local authority has been responsible for brokering support in terms of funding and arranging for advanced skills teachers from outstanding schools in the county to work alongside school staff to improve their practice, and for providing courses for overseas trained teachers in order to give them a better understanding of the English education system. Lilac Sky Schools has continued to provide effective support for the leadership team. The introduction of its systems and protocols for the capture and analysis of information about pupils' progress is enabling school leaders to pinpoint underachievement much more accurately and timely so that improvements in the quality of teaching can be made.