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18 July 2007

Mrs Needle
The Headteacher
Sproughton Church of England Primary School
Church Lane
Sproughton
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Dear Mrs Needle

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Sproughton Church of England Primary School

Introduction

Following my visit with Trevor Watts Additional Inspector to your school on 3rd and 4th July, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2006.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and the pupils' work. They observed lessons and met with the headteacher, key members of staff, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA)

Context

Since the school's inspection in September 2006 three teachers have left and two experienced teachers have been seconded to the school until the end of the academic year. One teacher has tendered her resignation from the school from the end of the summer term 2007. Three new appointments have been made to the school with effect from September 2007.

Achievement and standards

In the Foundation Stage standards are now improving. Pupils are keen to learn and making better progress because of the improved provision including improvements in teaching.

Scrutiny of pupils' current work and this year's results at Key Stage 1 reveals that satisfactory progress has been achieved in reading and mathematics, but inconsistencies in the development of writing remain. The school is aware of the issues in improving writing across both key stages, but as yet, there has been limited impact of the improvement strategies.

The school has just received its Key Stage 2 results for 2007. The mathematics results are close to the school's predictions at both Level 4 and Level 5 and are just below target. English and science results are below the school's expectations at Level 4 but improved in both subjects at Level 5. The 2007 results have yet to be analysed and validated in the context of national performance data, but the school's own monitoring data suggests satisfactory progress has been achieved overall.

Personal development and well-being

The majority of pupils continue to display positive attitudes towards their learning. They behave well and respond with enthusiasm to activities which challenge them and engage their interest. Attendance continues to be above the national average. The school's recent efforts to revise its reward systems have proved to be successful in motivating pupils. There is clear recognition and celebration of pupils' work and achievements in displays around the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous visit. Ten lessons were observed; none was unsatisfactory. The teaching in five was satisfactory; in four it was good; and one was outstanding.

Teachers have warm, positive relationships with their classes, and pupils feel welcomed, secure and valued. Pupils are mainly interested and attentive, join well in discussions, and concentrate soundly on the individual work. When learning is good teachers are skilful at pitching questions at a challenging level for a wide range of pupils in a class, and they introduce lessons and appropriate learning activities at a good pace. Their use of electronic white boards is confident and a valuable addition to the good range of resources used. Support assistants are mostly deployed well in supporting the learning of pupils who have a range of difficulties or disabilities. Pupils

are encouraged well to work together cooperatively and to develop their social and personal skills in many activities.

However, particularly in Key Stage 2, when teaching is satisfactory, teachers tend to tolerate too much low level restlessness and inattention by a minority of pupils. This mostly occurs when some of the learning activities are not well matched to pupils' needs. Some activities have not been especially challenging for the more able pupils, and as a result pupils' motivation has not been sparked and progress has slowed.

In the Foundation Stage the quality of education is now significantly improving because of the changes its organisation and in teaching and learning. However, the present teacher is only at the school for this term, and it is not possible to project forward how much, or which aspects, of the improvement will be successfully carried forward next term.

As a result of these improvements, children are now making satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in the areas of language and personal skills, and are becoming confident, eager and cooperative learners. Children display a very wide range of ability levels, and the overall level varies considerably from year to year. The teaching is motivating and enthusiastic. It is planned and organised well, being based on a sound and appropriate curriculum, with activities that include several different areas of development. Purposeful and creative play activities add valuably to the range of experiences and to children's enjoyment. The very recent addition of a covered area has helped the teacher to make more frequent and good use of the outdoors for all areas of the curriculum. The teaching is beginning to be based more securely on accurate assessments of children's levels of attainment. The more formal lessons, such as for literacy, are delivered at a good pace, with children very well motivated and eager to answer questions. In groups, they work well with adults and with each other. Support staff and other adults are capable and knowledgeable, and are of real benefit with groups of children.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- Raise standards and achievement by improving the quality of teaching so that work matches pupils' abilities – satisfactory progress
- Improve the provision for reception children – satisfactory progress

Care, guidance and support

The good level of pastoral care provided for pupils continues to be a strength of the school. Academic guidance is now developing appropriately and the school has placed considerable emphasis on the priority of developing its system to monitor and

track pupil progress. Pupil progress data is now being gathered regularly and used to identify where pupils are on track and where interventions are needed to address underachievement. This is being well used by senior staff and governors to assess current performance and class teachers are now beginning to consider this data in planning their class groupings and targeting individuals for additional support. However this information is not yet being consistently used by teachers across the school to routinely inform learning activities on a daily basis. There is potential for class teachers to use this information more consistently in planning and introducing work, particularly when differentiating work to meet individual needs.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- Put in place robust systems for tracking pupils' progress – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

The headteacher continues to provide sound leadership and direction for the work of the school. She is focused on appropriate priorities in order to move the school forward. Despite the continued staffing changes and the forthcoming changes in September 2007 the momentum has been sustained. There are undoubtedly challenges ahead with the significant staffing changes next term, but the careful induction of new staff has already begun and the headteacher, governors and LA are aware of the priority to sustain the momentum in the new term.

The monitoring of teaching and learning has continued with the support of the local authority. This indicates that teaching is improving and teachers are receptive to advice and improvement strategies. Lesson observations are appropriately becoming more focused on pupil progress rather than teacher activity, and monitoring evidence supports this.

The governors are increasingly holding the school to account and have an improved understanding of the school's priorities and aspects to strengthen. In particular they demonstrate a growing understanding of their role in monitoring standards and achievement closely.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- Put in place regular and robust systems for monitoring teaching and learning- satisfactory progress.

External support

The local authority (LA) continues to provide good support for the school. A variety of subject and strategy advisers from the authority have continued to support teachers and have influenced practice appropriately. The LA has also conducted monitoring of teaching and learning. The LA support for the recent creation of the outdoor play area was helpful and appreciated by the school. Further building plans are being created to improve the learning environment for pupils and the school is hoping to secure support from the LA for these developments.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory progress

Newly appointed teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

Improve teaching and learning by:

- reinforcing consistently high expectations in terms of classroom management in order to promote consistently good behaviour for learning.
- using assessment information consistently to plan differentiated learning tasks which are closely matched to pupils' needs.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Children and Young People in Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

Judith Matharu
H M Inspector