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3 December 2007

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

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

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 14 and 15 November, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

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

Progress since being subject to special measures – *satisfactory*

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory progress

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF SPROUGHTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 14 - 15 November 2007

Evidence

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and the pupils' work. I observed seven 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 four teachers have left and three new appointments have been made to the school with effect from September 2007. Two of the newly-appointed teachers hold management posts: one as Key Stage 2 and literacy coordinator and one as Key Stage 1 and numeracy coordinator.

Achievement and standards

The results of 2007 were mixed. At Key Stage 1, reading and mathematics remained just above local and national averages. However results in writing slipped significantly from 2006 to below the national average. In particular, there were no pupils achieving Level 3 in writing which the school found disappointing. Improving writing remains a major priority for the school.

At Key Stage 2 standards were satisfactory in English but dropped in mathematics and science to below national averages. Level 5 results improved in English and science, but were below the school's target in mathematics.

Progress from Key Stage 1 to 2 improved in English in 2007, although very good progress in reading offset considerably weaker progress in writing. Progress in mathematics was satisfactory overall, but progress in science was inadequate. Given pupils' starting points, progress by the end of Key Stage 2 was satisfactory overall. The school recognises that improvements in writing and science are priorities for action.

Personal Development and Wellbeing

Pupils' personal and social development continues to be good. Pupils display mostly positive attitudes to school and the majority behave well in lessons and at social times. Many show real enthusiasm for learning activities. Pupils are responding well to the incentives being introduced through the school's revised rewards scheme. There is good recognition of a wide range of pupil achievements, with bright and attractive displays evident around the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Seven lessons were observed during this monitoring visit; none was inadequate. The teaching in three was satisfactory; in three it was good; and one was outstanding. Teachers are establishing positive relationships with their pupils and their expectations of work and progress are high. The school's recent efforts in improving behaviour management are having a positive impact. This is an improvement; teachers are clear about their expectations of good behaviour for learning and use a range of effective strategies to promote this. Consequently, most pupils are responding well and enjoy good relationships with their teachers. The learning environment has been improved by the attractive displays in classrooms.

The quality of teaching and learning overall remains variable, but is always at least satisfactory. In the best lessons some good questioning was evident when pupils were required to think hard and teachers constantly probed their understanding. The differentiation of learning tasks is improving. In the most successful lessons, better matching of appropriate tasks, relevant to pupils' abilities, is improving the level of challenge for different ability groups. In these lessons, those who are coasting are quickly picked up and suitably challenged. In the lesson judged to be outstanding, skilful use of the interactive whiteboard stimulated very good learning and contributed well to pupils' enjoyment of the activity. There were several examples of pupils really enjoying their learning; for example in a Year 5/6 numeracy lesson and a combined Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 music session based on an earlier visit to a park. In less successful lessons, the resources used were less interesting and did not provoke as much enthusiasm from pupils. Further, higher ability pupils were less well challenged, resulting in progress slowing and the pace of learning being interrupted unnecessarily.

Improving writing remains a key priority for the school and an action plan is in place to improve this. A reading culture is being developed to support writing, with increased emphasis on the newly created library resource. Support assistants are deployed well in supporting the learning of pupils with a range of difficulties or disabilities.

In the Foundation Stage, improvements have been sustained. The new outdoor provision offers good opportunities for learning. There is a well organised and purposeful approach to planning for learning. Learning intentions are made clear in lessons. There are good developments in aspects of creative play, which have been previously identified as under-developed. There is good assessment of pupils' needs and abilities. A promising start has been made, in developing links between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Some effective shared teaching was observed with pupils coming together to really enjoy their learning. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in the early years.

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

Pastoral care and concern for pupils' welfare continue to be good features of the school. A more robust approach to tracking individual pupil progress is developing soundly. This is providing the school with clear information about where pupils are on-track to meet targets and where interventions are needed.

Teachers are now much clearer about key assessment points and are using assessment information more systematically in planning lesson activities and targeting pupils more accurately through appropriate differentiation. This is improving the level of challenge in lessons. Some inconsistencies remain in marking; at best it is helpful, detailed and provides clear advice to pupils. However, occasionally it is too general to be of use in helping pupils improve their work.

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 good direction for the work of the school. She has inducted new colleagues well into the school, communicated her expectations clearly and placed an appropriate emphasis on developing good relationships in order to create effective team working. The headteacher has made an accurate evaluation of current provision and demonstrates clear understanding of the priorities for improvement. The revised action plan targets these priorities appropriately. Ongoing monitoring of teaching and learning has continued with support from the local authority. A new monitoring programme has been initiated this term. This identifies regular and robust monitoring procedures. Early monitoring indicates that teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory with some good features. Lesson observations during the monitoring visit confirm that teaching is at least satisfactory and some of it is good.

The newly appointed literacy and numeracy coordinators have a clear focus on improvement planning and good ideas on how to move their subjects forward. There is good potential for improvement in their plans. A positive outcome of the collaborative approach which is emerging is the shared lesson planning being undertaken. There is considerable potential to improve practice through developing collaborative work further, for example in the plans for paired observations. Overall,

the capacity of leadership and management to effect ongoing improvement has improved this term. The governors increasingly hold the school to account and have a good understanding of progress and areas for improvement.

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. Local authority advisers have continued to have an input into curriculum development and in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The work on developing thinking skills has been particularly well received by pupils and teachers and is influencing practice in school accordingly.

The school continues to seek support from the local authority to provide additional facilities. For example, there is an acute need for additional teaching spaces for withdrawal and targeted individual or small group support, as required. Secondly the

school is seeking disabled toilet facilities to meet the needs of current pupils. Further, the current lack of a suitable office space for the headteacher poses difficulties at times in the execution of routine leadership and management tasks.

Priorities for further improvement

- Carefully target support to improve teaching and learning to a consistently good standard
- Improve performance in writing through consistent application of the writing action plan and close monitoring of this
- Raise attainment in science