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27 January 2011

Ms E Lynch
Interim Headteacher
Kettlefields Primary School
Stetchworth Road
Dullingham
Newmarket
CB8 9UH

Dear Ms Lynch

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Kettlefields Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 January 2011, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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.

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed if the current mentoring arrangements with a partner school can be extended.

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire.

Yours sincerely

David Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2010.

Ensure that the quality of teaching and support leads to pupils making consistently good progress by:

- ensuring leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of all school staff and plan bespoke professional development
- improving teachers' subject knowledge and expectations
- providing opportunities for teachers to work alongside expert colleagues to share and promote good practice
- providing teaching assistants and other adult helpers with training, regular guidance and support so they can effectively promote learning for groups and individuals.

Increase the capacity of leaders by:

- providing support and training for subject leaders and the acting deputy headteacher so they are able to demonstrate a capacity to fulfil their roles independently
- developing the ability of leaders at all levels to contribute to school improvement
- ensuring that senior leaders have the skills to engage the full range of stakeholders in the school improvement process
- ensuring the governing body challenges and supports the school effectively and that all statutory duties are met.

Improve behaviour by:

- improving the quality of teaching
- ensuring expectations of behaviour are well understood, consistent and continually reinforced by all staff
- providing opportunities for pupils to be involved in the design of rewards and sanctions so they are meaningful to them.

Regain the confidence of parents and staff by:

- ensuring communication is regular, positive, honest and proportionate
- ensuring that staff and parents are consulted about significant changes, so they have the opportunity to contribute to the vision and direction of the school
- ensure that feedback to parents and staff about their views includes proposed actions and the reasons for these.

Special measures: monitoring of Kettlefields Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 25 January 2011

Evidence

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, groups of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, a representative from the local authority, and all members of staff.

Context

The previous headteacher resigned her post with effect from the 1 November 2010. The local authority has provided the governing body with the services of a local authority inspector to fulfil the role of headteacher for as long as required. A temporary Year 5 and 6 teacher requested release from her contract during the autumn half term and left immediately. A supply teacher took responsibility for this class for the remainder of the autumn term. One of the permanent members of staff who acted as deputy headteacher during this period has reverted to her former position. A new acting deputy headteacher was appointed at the beginning of the January term on a one year contract. A special needs coordinator has been appointed on a part-time contract.

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

The outcomes of the 2010 national tests for pupils in Years 6 were more positive than the previous year; outcomes were above the national average in English and mathematics. The results of the teacher assessment conducted in Year 2 continue the five year profile of positive results in reading, writing and mathematics. Each of these key areas produced outcomes above the national figure although results in mathematics were significantly above the national average. Almost all of the 2011 Year 6 pupils made the expected progress in English, Key Stage 1 to 2. However, only three-quarters of this group made the same progress in mathematics. The three year trend in educational value added in mathematics at Key Stage 2 has been significantly below the national average.

HMI visited all teaching groups. Progress was at least satisfactory on all occasions and good for some individuals and groups. Number work was observed in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2; whereas pupils made a confident start with mental arithmetic in the younger classes, the older pupils showed less confidence. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 made errors with place value when subtracting and pupils in Year 3 and 4 struggled with addition of 3 and 4 digit numbers.

A brief scrutiny of the pupils' mathematics books from Years 1 to 6 points to a pattern of inconsistency in the teaching of key skills and some incomplete work, related to a lack of concentration rather than ability. HMI will conduct a detailed scrutiny of the pupils' English and mathematics books with the subject coordinators and senior staff during the summer term monitoring visit.

The school is beginning to assemble a detailed assessment data base to monitor pupil progress. The school believes that all pupils in Year 6 are likely to achieve the level expected for their age in the national tests; however, pupil progress towards the high level targets is more variable. The impact of assessment for learning will be reviewed at each monitoring visit.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The pupils' behaviour was satisfactory overall; however, HMI observed pupils in Years 3 to 6 who quietly disengaged themselves from the lesson or worked at the slowest pace they could, even when perfectly capable of completing the task set. Some individuals deliberately disengage from the task unless directly supervised while others are distracted by those around them. Staff are working hard to address this matter. The inspector has asked the school to send evidence of children's progress and/or their attitude to learning, home for their parents and carers to review. In contrast, many pupils are pleased to help their peers in class, work diligently in lessons and give freely of their time at break and lunch to make a positive contribution to the school.

HMI found time each morning to meet parents and carers at the school gate. In these informal discussions it was evident that: communications between the school and families had improved; parents and carers felt behaviour was better; their children were happy at school; and that they had renewed confidence in the new leadership team. A number of parents and carers expressed pleasure with the changes in teaching and learning introduced in Years 5 and 6.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Improve behaviour by:
 - improving the quality of teaching
 - ensuring expectations of behaviour are well understood, consistent and continually reinforced by all staff
 - providing opportunities for pupils to be involved in the design of rewards and sanctions so they are meaningful to them – satisfactory.

- Regain the confidence of parents and staff by:
 - ensuring communication is regular, positive, honest and proportionate
 - ensuring that staff and parents are consulted about significant changes, so they have the opportunity to contribute to the vision and direction of the school
 - ensure that feedback to parents and staff about their views includes proposed actions and the reasons for these – good.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching and learning was satisfactory in all the lessons observed. Small group work led by teaching assistants was appropriate and many of these sessions provided clear instruction. Not all small group work consistently emphasises the need to complete basic tasks, for example, such as writing on a line. Pupils made good progress when tasks were engaging, questioning was precise and well-directed and, most importantly, the need to complete work in a given time was made clear. Some whole class introductions take a significant part of the lessons and, despite good questioning, off-task behaviour develops. The best questioning drew articulate responses from pupils who used subject vocabulary accurately and displayed an ability to think logically.

The less effective lessons or parts of lessons could be attributed to: weaknesses in transition between one part of the lesson and the next task that left some pupils unsure of what was required; times when the task or the information being presented was not visible to all pupils; or, quite simply, tasks that did not have demanding time frames. On some occasions, introductions failed to model a key aspect of the work the pupils would encounter and therefore presented the class with a difficulty that could hinder progress.

The inspector observed all of the staff who were available to teach. Three of the seven lessons were judged to provide effective teaching. The other lessons were satisfactory with some strengths and areas for development.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and support leads to pupils making consistently good progress by:
 - ensuring leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of all school staff and plan bespoke professional development
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge and expectations
 - providing opportunities for teachers to work alongside expert colleagues to share and promote good practice

- providing teaching assistants and other adult helpers with training, regular guidance and support so they can effectively promote learning for groups and individuals – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new leadership team has established a positive mood amongst the staff, and parents and carers comment that there has been a 'new beginning'. The interim headteacher is driving improvement and managing the support provided by the local authority effectively. Following the resignation of the substantive headteacher, the appointment of an experienced primary headteacher has been a very positive move. Similarly, the new deputy headteacher has the skills to be the lead practitioner as the school moves forward. Appropriate basic protocols and procedures are being put in place. For example, a special needs coordinator has been employed on a part-time contract to bring up-to-date the provision of support and the related administration.

The interim headteacher and deputy headteacher were invited to conduct some lesson observations with HMI. The views they expressed matched the judgements made by the inspector, demonstrating that the senior team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Increase the capacity of leaders by:
 - providing support and training for subject leaders and the acting deputy headteacher so they are able to demonstrate a capacity to fulfil their roles independently
 - developing the ability of leaders at all levels to contribute to school improvement
 - ensuring that senior leaders have the skills to engage the full range of stakeholders in the school improvement process
 - ensuring the governing body challenges and supports the school effectively and that all statutory duties are met – good.

External support

The local authority has responded rapidly to the changing situation following the resignation of the previous headteacher. Having established a new leadership team, much of the developmental work in the local authority statement of action has been superseded. New ideas on how to support the school are rightly being considered, for example the mentoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, who is in her first year of teaching, by an experienced colleague. The planned role of a National Leader of Education from a local high-performing school is rightly being

reconsidered. The local authority has done well to respond flexibly and with imagination; the positive impact of this work can be seen in the improved quality of teaching, renewed parental confidence and the effectiveness of leadership.

Priorities for further improvement

- Focus on the quality of learning and evaluate the causes of pupil disengagement.