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7 July 2011

Mrs C Woolf
Headteacher
Eastwood Primary School
Rayleigh Road
Leigh-on-Sea
SS9 5UT

Dear Mrs C Woolf

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Eastwood Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 July 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 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**

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – **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 the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Southend-on-Sea.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' learning by:
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons
 - making better use of assessment information to plan activities that increase the pace of pupils' learning and close gaps between the attainment of boys and girls
 - adopting strategies that engage pupils more so that they can take greater ownership of their learning
 - making better use of time in lessons to increase the pace of learning.
- Develop a more effective curriculum that:
 - promotes key skills, particularly writing, systematically across different subjects
 - makes learning more interesting by linking subjects more closely.
- Establish a consistent approach to marking so that pupils know how to improve their work, by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide a clear evaluation of pupils' strengths and the next important steps for their learning
 - pupils are involved more in setting their targets and assessing their progress and that of others.
- Generate a greater capacity for sustaining improvements in the school by:
 - defining clearly the roles of senior leaders
 - identifying where teachers' expertise needs improving and providing tailored professional development to improve outcomes for pupil– making sure that planned actions to tackle priorities are acted upon by all.
- Raise attendance levels by making parents fully aware of their responsibilities to minimise absence.

Special measures: monitoring of Eastwood Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 5 July 2011

Evidence

The inspector looked at the school's work, visited all classrooms, scrutinised pupils' exercise books and observed eight lessons. She looked at documents including minutes of the governing body and information about pupils' progress. She met with staff, groups of pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection there have been several changes. A local authority funded nurture base opened in March 2011, providing places for pupils in need of additional support across Southend West. Two teachers have left the school. One teacher is absent on long-term sick leave. Two teachers are on maternity leave. A deputy headteacher has stepped down from that post of responsibility and is now a full-time teacher.

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

Pupils' achievement is improving. Recent, unvalidated test data from the national tests for Year 6 pupils demonstrate that pupils continue to increase their rate of progress and, consequently, the school has met its challenging targets for 2011. More pupils reached the levels expected nationally in English and mathematics than in recent years. In mathematics, the school exceeded its target for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is improving, particularly in reading, where all pupils gained Level 2. However, standards in writing still lag behind those in reading across the school. Although there is significant improvement at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Key Stage 1, there remains a legacy of underachievement, particularly in the lower part of Key Stage 2, which has yet to be tackled successfully. The school is monitoring the progress of all pupils systematically, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the overall evaluation of their progress by staff is still at a relatively early stage of development. Pupils say that lessons are becoming more interesting and that they want to learn. They are taking more pride in their work and they were keen to show their exercise books to the inspector to demonstrate their progress. Pupils receiving additional support say that they enjoy their lessons, particularly when they are in a small group, practising their reading, writing and mathematics skills.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils continue to be polite and welcoming to visitors. Behaviour in lessons has improved since the previous monitoring inspection and the atmosphere around the school is much calmer. However, some squabbling in the playground remains, particularly over football.

Pupils' attendance is improving. The school has put a series of incentives in place which are working well. Fewer parents are taking their children on holiday during term time and the school is working more effectively with pupils who are persistently absent. Consequently, the school is exceeding the attendance targets set by the local authority.

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

- Raise attendance levels by making parents fully aware of their responsibilities to minimise absence – **Good**

The effectiveness of provision

The improvement in pupils' progress is due to the improvement in teaching across the school. The inspector observed a greater proportion of good teaching than at the last visit. Where teaching was good, teachers have a clear picture of what they want pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson. Expectations are high and the level of challenge is appropriate to pupils' abilities. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson for more-able pupils, the teacher set a practical problem where pupils had to work out the area of materials needed to refurbish the room by using metric measurements and then to cost this by using imperial measures. The pupils understood the purpose of this exercise and were suitably motivated by the task. In a Year 1 English lesson, pupils were writing a recount of sports day, using pictures to sequence the events. The teacher skilfully led the pupils to use words such as 'first' and 'next' to order the events. Consequently, the pupils made good progress in their learning and produced work of a good quality.

Although a greater proportion of teaching is now strong, some inadequate practice remains. Where it is inadequate, teachers do not set clear expectations for what pupils are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Also, teachers' subject knowledge is weak, resulting in a poor diagnosis by the teacher of what the pupils already know and what they need to learn. Consequently, the work set does not challenge or motivate the pupils sufficiently well. For example, during a physical education lesson, the pupils remained sitting inactive for too long and did not have enough practise to improve their skills. They were not out of breath or physically challenged by the end of the lesson.

The curriculum is being adapted more successfully to meet individual pupils' learning needs. Staff are using data on attainment increasingly well to identify weaknesses in pupils' skills. Interventions are being targeted more carefully and monitored regularly

to check for their success in accelerating pupils' learning. Where teaching is good, the challenge for more-able pupils in particular is appropriate. The school is beginning to look at how to use the curriculum more effectively to promote pupils' skills, particularly in literacy and mathematics. However, this is still at an early stage of development.

The quality of work in pupils' exercise books continues to improve. Marking is regular and becoming increasingly consistent in quality across the school. Pupils know the levels they are working at and what they need to do next to improve their work. Teachers give pupils time to respond to their marking, which is making their comments more meaningful and leading to pupils' faster progress. However, although the quality of marking is improving, some staff miss opportunities to correct pupils' work while they are working with them in small groups. This means pupils sometimes copy incorrect work from their whiteboards into their exercise books.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' learning – **satisfactory**
- Develop a more effective curriculum – **satisfactory**
- Establish a consistent approach to marking so that pupils know how to improve their work – **good**

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive headteacher, supported effectively by the head of school, is continuing to improve the quality of education the pupils receive. The systems of accountability introduced at the last monitoring visit are now beginning to have an impact on raising the quality of teaching and improving pupils' progress. Data on pupils' attainment is being used increasingly well by staff to identify underachievement and to target additional support for individuals and groups of pupils where appropriate.

Extensive training has been provided for all staff by the head of school and other external consultants, including visits to other schools to observe outstanding teaching. Staff appreciate this and say it is enabling them to improve their own classroom practice. Staff morale is improving. Senior and middle leaders are increasing in confidence, but recognise that there is still a long way to go to ensure that their actions result in all pupils performing to their potential. Although the management and understanding of data is improving, the leadership of this area remains, to a large extent, externally driven. This is the same for much of the day-to-day monitoring of teachers' planning and lesson observations.

The governing body is increasing its role and holding the school more effectively to account. Members are now aware of what needs to be done to continue to improve

the quality of teaching and are prepared to take decisive action where necessary. They know that leadership capacity within the school is not yet strong enough in order for the school to sustain continuous improvement. The governing body is taking appropriate steps to work with the local authority in order to appoint a substantive headteacher.

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

- Generate a greater capacity for sustaining improvements in the school – **satisfactory**

External support

The quality of support from the local authority remains good. In securing an executive headteacher and head of school from a neighbouring school, it has provided much needed ambition, direction and stability for the school community. This is resulting in significant improvements in the outcomes for pupils. The human resources department is providing good support for the external headteacher in dealing with staffing issues. However, the necessary procedures are sometimes cumbersome and improvement is slow overall, too frequently leaving pupils with inadequate teaching.

Priorities for further improvement

- Eradicate inadequate teaching.