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14 November 2011

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

Dear Mrs Woolf

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Eastwood Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 and 11 November 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 third 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 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 should 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 third monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 November, 2011.

Evidence

The inspector looked at the school's work, visited all classrooms, scrutinised pupils' exercise books, observed 11 lessons and carried out a learning walk. She looked at documents including minutes of governing body meetings and information about pupils' progress. She met with staff, groups of pupils, parents, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection there have been several staff changes. Four teachers have left the school and four have been appointed. Two teaching assistants have left and two have been appointed.

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

Pupils' achievement continues to improve. Recent data from the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2011 demonstrate that pupils continue to increase their rate of progress, particularly in English. Consequently, more pupils reached the levels expected nationally for 11-year-olds than previously. However, pupils' progress in mathematics lags behind that in English. This is linked to some remaining inconsistencies in the quality of mathematics teaching across the school. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is improving, particularly in reading, where all pupils gained Level 2. However, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2b remains too low to ensure that all pupils have a good chance of reaching the nationally expected levels in reading by the time they leave the school.

The school is monitoring pupils' progress systematically, including of those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are being identified more effectively for intervention lessons because staff are becoming secure in evaluating pupil progress data. The content of these interventions is increasingly better matched to pupils' learning needs and, consequently, pupils are becoming more confident learners and say they enjoy these sessions. However, where teaching remains weak, pupils struggle to understand what is expected of them and become frustrated and confused. Pupils say that lessons are becoming more interesting and that they want to learn. They like the 'connected curriculum' and continue to take more pride in their work. The volume of work in their exercise books is increasing. There are now more activities to develop pupils' basic skills well.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils continue to be friendly and polite to visitors. During the inspection, behaviour in and around the school was calm and purposeful. Pupils say disruptions to lessons are infrequent and, in the main, they are dealt with fairly by staff. Pupils explained that, since the length of the lunch break had been reduced, there have been fewer arguments over football. Those spoken to say they are very happy with the new arrangements and they feel lunchtime has improved as a result. The introduction of play buddies and play leaders is having a positive impact and pupils appreciate these changes.

Pupils' attendance continues to improve. The school is exceeding the attendance targets set by the local authority and this aspect of its work is continuing to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

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

Variability still remains in the quality of teaching. The inspector observed a greater proportion of good teaching than at the last visit and this is resulting in pupils making better progress than previously. Where teaching was good, teachers explained to pupils clearly what they wanted them to learn and gave pupils effective strategies for tackling their work. Expectations are rising and work is generally better matched to pupils' abilities. Marking now links to identifying what pupils need to learn next and pupils say they are given time to do their corrections. Teacher subject knowledge is increasing and teachers are now more confident to adapt their lesson plans during a lesson to ensure that pupils' learning needs are met. For example, in a good phonics lesson, the teacher quickly adapted the lesson to build on the previous activity, which children enjoyed and understood, introducing the new concept they needed to learn into a game they knew. Where teaching remains satisfactory, it is linked to weak classroom organisation, which sometimes inhibits pupils from learning as quickly as they are able. For example, children in Reception were distracted by noisy activities near them when the teacher required their attention for focused phonics work. Where teaching remains inadequate, the teacher did not match the work accurately to the pupils' ability levels; this led to pupils not understanding what they were being taught. In this lesson, the teacher did not provide sufficient practical activities to support pupils' understanding.

The curriculum is being targeted more successfully to meet individual pupils' learning needs. Through setting for some subjects and providing small group interventions for those pupils needing additional support, the level of challenge and expectation for pupils' progress is increasing. The new 'connected curriculum' introduced at the start of this term is being delivered enthusiastically by staff who say they are enjoying linking subjects together to make learning more interesting for pupils. It is

too early to measure the impact this is having on improving pupils' attainment and rate of progress.

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 – good
- 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 drive forward improvements at an appropriate pace. The impact of this is evident in the improving pupil progress data and quality of teaching. Staff morale is much more positive and new staff say they feel well supported by the executive leadership team. Middle leaders are developing their capacity to drive improvements well. They are increasing their confidence in evaluating the quality of their work in relation to its impact on pupils' progress, but they are not involved in evaluating the quality of teaching. There are some relative weaknesses remaining in the systems to monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly for those pupils with behavioural difficulties. Support commissioned from the local authority by the executive leadership team is targeted well. Parents who spoke with the inspector are appreciative of the improvements to the school since being placed in special measures.

The governing body is demonstrating an increasing ability to hold the school to account. It is working closely with the local authority to secure the next phase of leadership for the school. The executive leadership is determined to eradicate the very small amount of inadequate teaching that remains and to build leadership capacity at all levels within the school. All teachers say the advice they have received from the head of school, in particular, has led to them understanding how to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress. However, because not all staff have succeeded in implementing the advice provided into their own classroom practice, this is limiting the capacity within the school to improve further.

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 leadership team, which consists of the executive headteacher and head of school from a neighbouring school, it has enabled the school to stabilise and improve its systems to become a more cohesive learning community. This is

resulting in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. However, some inadequate practice remains. The local authority is supporting the school well in evaluating the capacity of substantive staff to drive forward improvements once the executive leadership departs.