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Mr Martin White
Headteacher
Drayton CofE Junior School
School Road
Drayton
Norwich
NR8 6EF

Dear Mr White

Special measures monitoring inspection of Drayton CofE Junior School

Following my visit with Lynn Lowery, Additional Inspector, to your school on 27–28 November 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, governors and local authority representatives who gave up their time to talk to the inspection team.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2012. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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, The Diocesan Director of Education for Norwich and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2012

- As a matter of urgency improve the quality of teaching in order to boost the progress pupils make by ensuring that:
 - teachers have a shared understanding of what constitutes good learning and teaching
 - teachers use pupils' positive attitudes to learning to enable them to become independent learners
 - all tasks are precisely and appropriately matched to pupils' different abilities
 - marking and feedback are of a consistently high quality
 - teaching assistants fully understand their role in supporting learning so that pupils can make their own choices about approaches to take.

- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics and English by:
 - embedding key skills in numeracy and literacy across different subjects
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding in solving real-life problems.

- Improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring middle leaders have regular opportunities to evaluate teaching and its impact on learning in their subjects and year groups
 - raising the quality of feedback to teachers about how to move their teaching on, and providing them with high quality training
 - making sure the school development plan has clear targets for improvement so that the impact of actions can be judged.

Special measures: monitoring of Drayton CofE Junior School

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 27–28 November 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, making visits to 15 whole-class lessons, four small-group lessons and an assembly. They looked closely at documents and met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of pupils, teachers and teaching assistants, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority. Inspectors took into account the views of parents and carers as expressed in 'Parent View'.

Context

Since the school was inspected in May 2012, two teachers have returned on a part-time basis from maternity leave. Two part-time teachers have changed to full-time posts and a third has moved to another school. The senior leadership team has been restructured by removing the 'year head' roles. It now consists of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assessment coordinator and the mathematics and English coordinators. Two parent governors have been elected and one governor has left the governing body. An improvement board has been set up to monitor the school's progress. It is made up of senior leaders, governors and local authority officers.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils are making better progress. The 2012 test results showed that the pupils who left in the summer had made progress at the expected rate. However, most schools nationally did better than this. Most current year groups have now made up for their slow progress in previous years. However, some are still slightly behind in certain subjects: Year 5 in reading and writing and Year 4 in mathematics. The school is working hard to close these gaps. Senior leaders now meet regularly with each teacher to check on pupils' progress, and to organise extra support for those at risk of falling behind.

The school has switched to mixed-ability teaching groups in mathematics. This means that teachers see the same pupils for mathematics as they do for other subjects. As a result, they find it easier to incorporate mathematical ideas into other lessons. Pupils are also getting better at using and applying mathematics. This is because teachers are including more investigations and real-life problems in mathematics lessons. Pupils are improving their writing because they are applying what they learn in English across all subjects.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. As a result, pupils are making better progress. The school's externally moderated lesson observations suggest that a majority of teaching is now good. During this inspection, nine of the 20 sessions observed were good and one was outstanding. The remainder required improvement in some aspects. No inadequate teaching was seen.

Where teaching requires improvement, it is for a variety of reasons. For example, one lesson could have been improved if the teacher had quickly checked round the class once they started working, and given them the necessary reminders sooner. In another lesson, the letter that pupils had to read before they started was too long for the slower readers to get on to the writing task that followed. Occasionally, a lack of subject knowledge causes problems, as observed in a science lesson and in the marking of mathematics. Teaching assistants sometimes give too much help to the least able pupils, especially in mathematics. On the other hand, pupils in one class were not given enough guidance when they practised their handwriting. Several held their pencils awkwardly or formed letters wrongly, and this was not corrected. At present, the school does not have a handwriting policy.

The school's calculation policy is helping to ensure that the work set for each year group builds sensibly on earlier work. However, it only deals with whole numbers at present, omitting fractions, decimals and percentages.

Teachers have worked together and with the support of senior leaders and specialist advisers to tackle the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Improvements to planning mean that teachers are better at setting work at the right level for each pupil, though more-able pupils are not always pushed hard enough. Literacy and numeracy are regularly built into lessons in different subjects. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils were encouraged to remember their literacy targets when writing about Hannukah. In a science lesson, pupils explained how they would graph the results from their experiment on heating and cooling.

Pupils' books are marked regularly and in line with the school's marking policy. This means that pupils know two good points about each piece of work and one thing they can improve. Teachers often include extra questions in their marking or ask for corrections, which they follow up later. This means that pupils are constantly being shown how to do better. Teachers are also helping pupils to become more independent learners by creating 'learning walls' for English and mathematics.

Teaching assistants now make a bigger contribution to pupils' learning. More time has been set aside for them to talk to teachers about lessons in advance. As a result, they understand their roles better and often create additional resources to work with their groups. In addition, they now contribute to marking. Following recent training,

teaching assistants play an important role in helping pupils who need to catch up, as well as supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite and behave well around the school. Their attendance is above average. They have positive attitudes and respond well to teachers' requests in lessons. Increasingly, pupils show independence in their learning. They refer to the 'learning wall' displays when they are working independently; for example, to get ideas for powerful words, to check punctuation or to remind themselves of mathematical methods. Pupils are increasingly expected to review their own and each other's work, to check that it meets the requirements set by the teacher.

The school takes good care of pupils. Safeguarding continues to meet national requirements.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher has responded very strongly to the judgement of the previous inspection. He is determined to put things right as quickly as possible and has made some key changes that have increased the pace of improvement. The senior leadership team has been restructured to provide clearer leadership in mathematics and English. These subjects are improving as a result. The deputy headteacher has been freed from class teaching to work directly with teachers to improve their practice. Consequently, teachers are very clear about what constitutes good teaching and learning. The regular reviews of pupils' progress mean that teachers in all year groups now feel accountable for the school's performance, not just those in Year 6.

The school's action plan includes a sensible range of strategies for tackling the weaknesses noted at the last inspection. It incorporates clear, term-by-term targets for improving teaching and for speeding up pupils' progress. At present, the school is meeting these targets. However, the plan has two weaknesses. There is no timescale for the various action points. In fact, all of the planned actions have already begun and there are no new initiatives scheduled to begin over the next two terms. In addition, some of the action points do not have a clear leader who can be held accountable by the headteacher or governing body.

The school's self-evaluation is now more rigorous. The regular reviews of pupils' progress mean that senior leaders and governors have frequent updates on the school's academic performance. Senior leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and give well-judged feedback to teachers. The mathematics and English coordinators check pupils' work carefully and also use planning meetings to establish consistency in the way teachers plan lessons and mark work. They have had few opportunities to observe their colleagues teaching their subjects.

The governing body recognises the need to increase its own effectiveness, and has carried out a self-review facilitated by the local authority. Governors are becoming less reliant on the headteacher's reports as their main source of information. For example, they have met with the school council and have attended open days alongside parents to get a wider perspective. Some governors are beginning to ask difficult questions that keep senior leaders on their toes, but others are less involved. Training in the interpretation of performance data is due shortly so that all governors can be more effective in this respect. Every meeting of the governing body now has standards and data on the agenda. However, the governing body is currently too reliant on the improvement board for monitoring progress against the school development plan. This is because it does not have an effective independent mechanism for this aspect of its work.

Governors recognise the importance of other aspects of the school that are valued by parents, particularly its strong emphasis on enrichment and pupils' personal development. Governors are therefore planning to encapsulate these aspects in a vision statement, to ensure that they are preserved. The vast majority of the 57 parents and carers who have responded to Parent View would recommend the school to another parent.

External support

The local authority is providing good support for the school. Its statement of action meets requirements and aligns closely with the school's action plan. There has been a good balance of advice and challenge. Local authority advisers have supported the mathematics subject leader and the deputy headteacher, who have worked extensively with teachers to strengthen the teaching of mathematics. The local authority has set up an improvement board, which is monitoring the school's progress and holding senior leaders to account.

A partnership is being developed with a successful Norfolk junior school. This is in the early stages, but is beginning to provide opportunities for senior leaders to work alongside their counterparts and for teachers to observe good teaching. An experienced governor from another school is working alongside the governing body in an advisory role, attending meetings but with no voting rights.