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28 November 2014

Mr Jerry Seaward
The Headteacher
Newport Church of England Aided Primary School
Hazel Close
Carisbrooke Meadows
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5GD

Dear Mr Seaward

Special measures monitoring inspection of Newport Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit with Stephanie Matthews, Additional Inspector, to your school on 26 and 27 November 2014, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2013. 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.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 Director of Children's Services for Isle of Wight and the Diocese of Portsmouth.

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2013

- Ensure no teaching is inadequate and increase the proportion of good or better teaching, by:
 - making sure teachers have the chance to observe good teaching and providing support during lessons so that they know what good teaching looks like and can share this practice with one another
 - making sure teachers increase the pace of lessons and expect pupils to complete their work with more urgency
 - making sure teachers use the information they have about the progress of pupils, particularly the more able, to give them work which is more challenging and more closely builds on what they already know and can do
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy and literacy skills in a range of situations and across different subjects.
- Increase pupils' progress and raise their attainment in English and mathematics, by:
 - making sure staff have higher expectations of what pupils can do in every lesson
 - giving pupils more opportunity to respond to the comments in their books from teachers' marking
 - frequently involving pupils in assessing the progress they are making towards their targets.
- Urgently increase the effectiveness of senior leaders in bringing about improvements in teaching by:
 - making sure that there is an appropriate leadership structure in place across the school and that leaders identify issues and introduce solutions
 - giving teachers precise feedback about what they need to do to improve, and showing them how to do so
 - providing a clear, well-structured framework for the development of pupils' skills and knowledge, right across the school, around which teachers can plan their work.
- Improve the support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and accelerate their progress rapidly, by:
 - further developing the systems to identify which pupils need support, and when they may have overcome their difficulties
 - helping leaders to monitor the effectiveness of the support provided for these pupils and rapidly making changes where support is not making enough difference.
- Make sure that governors gather more first-hand evidence to check the views of senior leaders and use this to challenge the school, by:
 - undertaking training to understand the data about the school in greater detail and how these compare with schools nationally
 - developing the systems for the performance management of the headteacher and senior leaders, to support them and hold them accountable for bringing about rapid improvements.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 26 and 27 November 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed teaching in every classroom and looked at pupils' work. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, teachers, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body with three other governors, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors talked with pupils and staff around the school and with parents in the playground at the start of the day. There were insufficient responses to the online survey, Parent View, for a report to be considered. A range of documents was scrutinised including teachers' planning for what pupils will learn, information about pupils' progress and behaviour, the school's records of checks on teaching, governing body minutes, safeguarding records, reports from the local authority and information about staff training.

Context

Two staff maternity leaves have started since the last monitoring inspection and two teachers have left. Three experienced teachers joined the permanent team in September, and the assistant headteacher has recently returned from maternity leave. A new job share arrangement is in place for one Reception class. The headteacher will be retiring at Christmas. The local authority has arranged for an experienced headteacher of a local good school to serve as acting headteacher from January to July, sharing this role with the deputy headteacher. Governors have plans in place to recruit a new headteacher for September 2015.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Teachers have raised their expectations considerably, both for pupils' progress and for the quality of their work. Pupils throughout the school are making better progress, with increasing proportions attaining at least the levels expected for their age. This improvement extends to all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who receive free school meals or who are looked after). However, gaps in earlier learning still undermine the achievement of a significant proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics, and still too few of the most able pupils attain higher than expected levels at age seven and age 11.

At the end of Reception in 2014, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development increased significantly compared to 2013, rising to above the national proportion. In Year 1 and Year 2, in the national screening check on knowledge and skills concerning letters and the sounds letters make (phonics), the proportion of pupils at the school who were successful also rose to above the national figure. In all these assessments, the improvement at the school was greater than the national improvement.

Year 2 assessments in the summer term showed an increase in the proportions of pupils who achieved the expected levels in reading, in writing and in mathematics. In reading, the proportion exceeding the expected level also increased. However, the proportion who achieved the higher than expected level in mathematics was unchanged, and in writing this declined. In reading, writing and mathematics, lower proportions than nationally continue to achieve the higher than expected levels.

At the end of Year 6 in the summer, more pupils than in 2013 showed they had made the expected progress during Key Stage 2 in reading and in writing, and higher proportions achieved the expected level. However, in mathematics the proportion making the expected progress and achieving the expected level declined. Because of this weakness in mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in all three subjects declined to be significantly below the national figure. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected levels declined in reading and mathematics, and was stable in writing. As a result, figures remain below the national level.

Pupils with special educational needs are making increasingly good progress. In Year 6 in 2014, many made at least as much progress as their peers, and this trend is emerging across the school.

The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium (many of whom also have special educational needs) is also increasing throughout the school. However, despite their very good progress during Year 6, many of these pupils still went on to secondary school trailing their peers in reading, writing and mathematics, and with a wider gap than pupils supported by this funding who left the school in 2013.

Pupils now take a pride in their English and mathematics work, and many pupils' books show good progress this term, especially in English. Progress in mathematics is less consistent, especially in Key Stage 2 where pupils often have to revisit work to cover gaps in their knowledge before moving on.

Teachers give pupils regular and timely opportunities to consider marking and respond. Increasingly, useful opportunities to check one another's work, or their own, help pupils understand what they have done well and where they can improve. Clear targets for their next steps in reading and writing mean that pupils know what they need to achieve next, and teachers plan accordingly. This kind of target setting is not so well developed for mathematics and therefore has less impact on pupils' progress in that subject.

The school has set ambitious targets for pupils' overall achievement in reading, writing and mathematics this year, for individuals and for whole year groups. However, similar targets have not been set for groups of pupils, including the most able and those supported by the pupil premium, and this limits how effectively teachers plan for them, and how well leaders check progress during the year.

The quality of teaching

More teaching is now good, although this improvement is not yet fully consistent across different subjects and year groups.

Teachers continue to have regular opportunities to observe good teaching. Valuable opportunities to work alongside teachers in a good school are planned for the spring term, when Newport staff will now have their own strengths to share, as well as much to gain.

Teachers' expectations are higher and many pupils enjoy and respond well to this challenge. However in Key Stage 2, gaps in some pupils' earlier learning mean pupils struggle to work at the level their teacher expects. Teachers do not always think ahead well enough about this likely problem, and some do not prepare pupils adequately for the challenge, or support them sufficiently during lessons.

Pupils often have rich opportunities in their topic work to develop skills for reading and writing, but too few opportunities are provided for mathematics. In some classes, lower expectations for pupils' achievement in their topic books mean that work is sometimes unfinished or untidy, and marking is less regular and helpful.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well around the school and in the playground. They told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school and appreciate the way all adults help them in the classroom and at social times. Parents, who inspectors spoke with, universally expressed their confidence about this.

The atmosphere inside the school is now calm and purposeful, supported by consistently high expectations for behaviour, courtesy and hard work. The special educational needs coordinator has successfully promoted dignity and respect for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and their attendance has improved as a result. The staff have worked well together to reorganise the environment and improve the quality and usefulness of displays.

During lessons, inspectors observed many pupils now working hard and persisting with challenging tasks. In Key Stage 2 though, some pupils still lack resilience to persevere, or to listen carefully to an adult for long enough, and this limits progress.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The deputy headteacher continues to ensure improvements in teaching, through focused feedback and bespoke training for individuals. The professionalism of all the staff shows in their hard work, team spirit and eagerness to develop. Subject leaders are developing well, and increasingly make a positive difference to teaching and pupils' achievement.

When teachers plan learning, they can now refer to suitable frameworks, developed by leaders to outline the expected progression in English, mathematics, phonics and the wider curriculum. Teachers now plan together routinely within their year and in mixed groups. At these times, they carefully consider pupils' progress in different subjects and how they should respond. However, the expected progression in handwriting is not clear, so the development of this skill is not taught or checked systematically enough.

The special educational needs coordinator has successfully established a more coherent approach to the identification and support of pupils with special educational needs. Furthermore, she ensures that these pupils are fully included in the life of their class and that teaching assistants who support them have the relevant knowledge, skills and resources. All statutory requirements are now met, and innovative practice is being developed in the way the school sets targets and plans provision, including in partnership with parents and carers.

The governing body is ably led and governors are committed fully to securing continuing rapid improvement. Roles and responsibilities are clear and governors visit the school regularly to check information provided to them by leaders, and to talk with pupils and staff. Governors are aware of the need to check independently the most important information provided to them by the school. They make good use of local authority reports and advice, and have sensibly asked the local authority to carry out an external review of the way the school uses its pupil premium funding. However, governors' records do not show well enough the way the governors check that the school is improving.

External support

Local authority consultants and inspectors continue to provide relevant, challenging and helpful evaluations and advice. The school has been well supported in building up the skills and membership of the governing body and in making suitable arrangements for senior leadership from January.