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Mrs Maxine Gray
The Interim Headteacher
Newport Church of England Aided Primary School
Hazel Close
Carisbrooke Meadows
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5GD

Dear Mrs Gray

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

Following my visit with David Shears, Additional Inspector, to your school on 25 and 26 February 2015, 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 fifth 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 not 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 and the Director of Children's Services for Isle of Wight.

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 fifth monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 February 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed teaching throughout Years 1 to 6 and looked at pupils' work. Meetings were held with the interim headteacher and other leaders, with pupils, and with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. Telephone discussions were held with representatives of the local authority. Inspectors talked with parents in the playground and considered a single letter. There were insufficient responses to the online survey, Parent View, for these to be considered. A range of documents was scrutinised including leaders' analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' planning for what pupils will learn, the school's records of checks on teaching and its improvement plans, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, governing body minutes and local authority reports.

Context

The previous headteacher left the school at the end of the autumn term. The experienced headteacher of a good school on the island joined as interim headteacher in January, initially for three days a week until July. A teacher vacancy is being advertised, with a supply teacher covering this class. Recruitment procedures for a new headteacher are underway.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics continues to improve throughout the school, with significantly better progress evident in some classes since January. However, this improvement remains variable between year groups, with older pupils still underachieving.

Gaps between the achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for those entitled to free school meals or looked after) and other pupils are closing steadily in all year groups. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs continues to accelerate. Some pupils in these groups are now making good progress.

In Reception classes, the school's current assessments indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development is likely to improve further in 2015. Current information about Year 1 pupils' progress in phonics (the sounds letters make) suggests that the proportion of pupils who are successful in the national screening check is also likely to improve for a second consecutive year.

In Year 2, current assessments indicate that fewer pupils than last year are on track to achieve the expected level in reading and in writing in the summer. However, current figures show more pupils than last year are likely to achieve the expected level in mathematics, and more are on track to achieve the higher than expected

levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The current Year 2 includes significantly more pupils with disabilities and special educational needs than previous years.

Current assessments in Year 6 indicate that more pupils than last year are on track to reach the expected level in reading in the summer term assessments. However, current figures also show fewer pupils than in 2014 on track to reach the expected level in writing and in mathematics. At current rates of progress, there is unlikely to be any improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected levels in any subject.

Encouragingly, the school's assessments show pupils in Year 6 on course to make better progress over Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and especially mathematics than previous year groups. Furthermore, the school's analysis indicates a likely reduction in the achievement gap between pupils supported by the pupil premium and others. Nevertheless, a risk remains that, for the second consecutive year, results for Year 6 will be below the national floor standard.

This term, in all classes, clear ambitious targets have been set for pupils' accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics to raise achievement in the summer to be above the school's current predictions.

The quality of teaching

Teaching observed during the inspection showed improvement on previous visits, and some good teaching was seen. However, the quality of teaching remains too variable, especially in Key Stage 2.

Teachers continue to improve the way they assess pupils' progress to inform planning for lessons. Meetings with senior leaders to discuss pupils' progress now influence teaching more directly, especially for underachieving groups and individuals. However, a mismatch between the school's current assessment system and the new National Curriculum has not been considered well enough, undermining the accuracy of teachers' planning for pupils' next steps.

Individual targets are now set for all pupils in writing and mathematics, recorded on helpful cards which can be used in different lessons. In some classes pupils are clear about these targets, they understand them and frequently evaluate their own progress towards achieving them. However, in other classes the targets are recorded in words pupils cannot read or understand, pupils cannot say what their targets are, and targets are not referred to frequently enough.

The interim headteacher has appropriately adjusted the way teachers plan for mathematics lessons in order to extend levels of challenge for the most able. Nevertheless, some Key Stage 2 pupils continue to say they find their mathematics work too easy, and inspectors found a lack of challenge still evident in some teachers' planning and the activities provided. In Key Stage 1, a high frequency of

work on pre-prepared sheets, with limited opportunities for pupils to then apply and develop their skills, restricts progress for all pupils, especially the most able.

Teachers across the school apply the school's clear marking policy with increasing consistency and give pupils more opportunities to respond. However, teachers do not always check the accuracy of pupils' responses and, in Key Stage 2, teachers' feedback still pays insufficient attention to pupils' spelling and punctuation.

The effectiveness of teaching assistants in Key Stage 1, including when they teach phonics, has improved significantly since the last inspection, resulting in better progress. In Key Stage 2, these staff are increasingly purposeful and well informed, especially when supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, although their effectiveness remains variable.

Teachers' expectations for the amount and quality of pupils' work in the wider curriculum remain too low, and teachers do not make good enough use of the time given to these subjects. In Key Stage 1, teachers have limited expectations for pupils' ability to work without the support of a pre-prepared sheet.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Many pupils behave well around the school and during lessons. These pupils are also attentive during lessons and helpful to adults and one another. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour in the school has improved since January.

In Key Stage 1, behaviour is generally good and parents expressed satisfaction that this is the case. In Key Stage 2, inspectors saw some instances of excessively noisy behaviour, for example when a class was lining up for physical education in the hall. Where teaching was less effective, inspectors also noted some pupils not sufficiently engaged in the lesson or distracting others.

At playtimes, low-level accidents are recorded efficiently and reported to parents, and suitable first aid is readily provided. However, such incidents occur too often. Adequate numbers of supervisors are in place, but not all have received training in managing pupils' behaviour, and senior leaders do not check records well enough to look for any trends that might cause concern.

The school has rightly identified that absence is too high for a number of pupils supported by the pupil premium. Leaders are taking appropriate action, including referrals to outside agencies.

Valuable improvements to the school's internal environment continue, including the recent addition of eye-catching and thought-provoking displays promoting core skills for English and mathematics.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The skills, experience and hard work of the interim headteacher have had an immediate, positive impact on the improvement of the school. The interim headteacher's accurate evaluation has already led to decisive and effective action to improve teaching further, with additional tuition introduced promptly for older pupils.

The interim headteacher has significantly empowered other senior leaders. She is working with them to check the accuracy of the school's information about pupils' achievement, and developing rapidly the school's systems for setting targets and tracking pupils' progress. However, this does not yet include consideration of pupils' learning of spelling and grammar.

It is good to see the interim headteacher involving leaders at all levels in urgent work to sharpen the school's improvement plans to focus on key remaining issues. The headteacher is also working very openly and effectively with governors and the local authority.

Since January, leaders' support and challenge for teachers has been re-focused where needed most, and all staff held firmly to account to consolidate earlier improvement. When lessons are checked, an emphasis on pupils' progress is raising staff's awareness of the need for rapid acceleration of learning in all classes, but especially in Key Stage 2. As a result, work in pupils' books and teachers' assessments reflect a significant improvement in some pupils' learning since the start of term.

The new Chair of the Governing Body is providing decisive leadership, including for the recruitment of a new headteacher and in dealing with the school's finances. Governors are taking appropriate action to improve the way they hold the headteacher to account for the improvement of the school and to ensure they check the information provided to them by senior leaders. Governors recognise the need for urgent and significant improvement in all their areas of operation. They are taking relevant action to secure this.

External support

The local authority has served the school well by arranging the services of a capable interim headteacher. Helpfully, local authority consultants are working well with the headteacher to steer their activities in the school. Senior advisers are working supportively with the governing body to develop effective governance and financial management. The work of the local authority inspector for special educational needs is, rightly, highly regarded by the school.