

05 February 2008

Miss E Hackett
Headteacher
Terrington St Clement Community School
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Terrington St Clement
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Dear Miss Hackett

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF TERRINGTON ST
CLEMENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Godfrey Bancroft and Kath Yates, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 23 and 24 January, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may 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 governors and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF TERRINGTON ST CLEMENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 23 and 24 January 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, nominated staff, the chair of governors and representatives from the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the last inspection there have been a number of staff changes, including the appointment of the assistant headteacher. The LA has provided enhanced support for the school for two years under the auspices of a Project Board, and, for the last 12 months, has channelled additional resources as part of its Intensifying Support Programme (ISP). In October the LA appointed an additional governor to support the development of the governing body.

Achievement and standards

The overall standard of pupils' work remains too low because in recent years too many pupils have not made the progress that they should. Standards in Key Stage 1 assessments have showed no significant improvement over the last five years and were again below the national average in 2007. The comparatively low starting points for Year 3 pupils when they begin Key Stage 2 have not, however, been properly addressed because the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 has been far too patchy. The pupils' uneven progress means that the standard of work of a significant proportion of older pupils is not as high as it should be. There are weaknesses in their basic skills, for example in writing, and gaps in their subject knowledge. Overall results in the most recent Key Stage 2 national tests in 2007 were well below national figures, particularly in science where standards were exceptionally low.

The school recognises that the legacy of underachievement can only be addressed by increasing the proportion of teaching that is consistently good and outstanding and through intensive support for targeted groups of pupils. Important steps have been taken to strengthen provision by overhauling the curriculum and improving the quality of teaching. These essential changes have been underpinned by significant improvements in the assessment of pupils' work and in the tracking of their progress. Although the school's tracking system is rather unwieldy and is not easy to analyse, the systematic collation of assessment data has raised teachers' expectations of what their pupils should achieve and has highlighted areas that need improving. Regular moderation of pupils' work ensures that assessments are reliable and that staff have a clearer understanding of the standards expected. Assessment information is shared with pupils and their parents, and informs suitable intervention and support for individuals who have fallen behind. The school's analysis of these interventions shows that they have accelerated the progress of pupils, particularly in Year 6. Suitable plans are in place to revise the tracking system and to implement further support for targeted groups of pupils.

Target-setting has strengthened. The use of individual targets is developing well and is helping to raise aspirations. Pupils know their targets in English, mathematics and science and are motivated to achieve the higher levels displayed. However, although pupils know what they are aiming to achieve, they are not always clear how to get there. This is because targets are not effectively used in lessons or in marking, so pupils are not always clear what they need to do to improve their work or how to achieve a higher level. Furthermore, teachers do not consistently use assessment information or targets to set suitably challenging work that is matched to pupils' different needs.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2007:

- Raise pupils' standards work in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved. Previously existing pockets of poor behaviour, which sometimes disrupted lessons, have been eliminated. This is mainly because lessons are more interesting and engaging than in the past, and because teachers apply the school's system for rewards and sanctions consistently. Good relationships between adults and pupils also underpin this improvement. Pupils are increasingly proud of their achievement and are taking greater care to present their work neatly. The majority apply themselves well during lessons and sustain their concentration, even when they are expected to be passive for long periods. When given the opportunity, they are attentive and eager to answer questions and work very well in pairs and small groups. Pupils are generally considerate of one another and are keen to discuss their work and share it with adults.

Attendance rose last year from a level below the national figure to slightly above average. This increase has been further sustained since September.

Quality of provision

Although the school has not achieved its target for 100% satisfactory and 50% good lessons, it knows where residual weaknesses lie and has made significant improvements to the quality of provision. Teaching has been strengthened both by new appointments and through the willingness of staff to embrace the intensive support and guidance. Regular and rigorous monitoring, primarily by the headteacher and the LA, has established common routines and has given individual teachers priorities for improvement. The quality of planning has improved. In most lessons the pupils' work is suitably guided by learning objectives, and many sessions present the class with an interesting range and variety of activities. Science lessons, for example, now have more practical activities that capture pupils' interest and better consolidate their learning. However there are times when the intended learning outcomes are neither precise nor ambitious enough and pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

Good relationships between teachers and pupils mean that pupils are well motivated and are eager to contribute in lessons. However, the pace of learning sometimes slackens and pupils become distracted, particularly when teaching is too didactic and when weak questioning gives pupils too few opportunities to engage in the lesson. Some teachers make good use of opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening, for example through partner discussion. They are also becoming increasingly skilful, towards the end of lessons, at reviewing the progress that pupils have made. Even so there are times when pupils are not sufficiently involved in this process. A similar picture is evident when teachers set targets for pupils' learning and progress. Pupils understand their targets, but there is a wide disparity between the most and least effective marking, even when it is completed conscientiously. Teaching assistants make an enthusiastic and helpful contribution to the support of pupils' learning, especially for those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school has taken suitable steps to improve the curriculum. Pupils are now provided with a broad and balanced curriculum where sufficient time is now allocated to all subjects. Each class now has a two hour period for science and a further half hour through the week. The short sessions are used appropriately to introduce new topics and to stimulate ideas for investigative activities. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved so that they have a better understanding of what and how the pupils should learn in science. Across all subjects, teachers are now planning a more creative curriculum with better links across subjects, thus meeting the school's objective that pupils should learn through exploration and investigation. The pupils enjoy the more practical approach to learning.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2007:

- Develop a shared understanding of what good practice in teaching is and ensure through rigorous monitoring and support that good practice is adopted consistently – satisfactory.
- Improve the curriculum so that it covers the whole National Curriculum in sufficient depth and gives greater emphasis to science – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Although weaknesses remain, the school's leadership has strengthened since the last inspection. The headteacher has shown commendable resilience and determination to tackle the complex staffing difficulties that have, in the past, been a barrier to the school's improvement. In order to do so, she has taken full advantage of the good support and guidance provided by the LA, particularly through the ISP co-ordinator. The headteacher has balanced well the need for support and challenge in order to improve the provision and outcomes for the pupils. The appointment of the assistant headteacher has invigorated the staff and has increased the capacity of the school's leadership. In general, staff have responded positively to the findings of the last inspection and have worked very hard to improve their practice; morale is good.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are more robust and rigorous. Lesson observations, work scrutinies and assessment meetings have effectively raised teachers' expectations. The school has 'turned a corner' in terms of

establishing a professional climate for self-improvement wherein teachers are keen to take responsibility for raising standards by developing their own practice. The monitoring and evaluation roles of subject leaders have been extended, with the support of the LA, which is beginning to develop leadership across the school.

Governance has strengthened. The chair of governors gives generously of his time and provides good support and challenge for the school. He is well supported by a core of committed governors and, more recently, by the work of an experienced additional governor. The governing body is reviewing its ways of working in order to improve its effectiveness and accountability.

External support

The LA's statement of action sets out a suitable programme of support for the school, which is an extension of that provided by the Project Board and through the ISP. However, in responding to the school's needs the LA has significantly improved the quality, urgency and effectiveness of its support since the school went into special measures. The school values the advice and guidance.

Priorities for further improvement

- Eradicate the most serious weaknesses in teaching and increase the proportion of good lessons by focusing more sharply on the quality and pace of pupils' learning in each lesson.