

1 May 2008

Mrs Julie Hall
Mundford Church of England Primary School
St. Leonards Street
Mundford
Thetford
Norfolk
IP26 5ED

Dear Mrs Hall

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF MUNDFORD CHURCH
OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with John Francis, Additional Inspector, to your school on 30 April and 1 May, 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 November 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 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 Diocese of Norwich, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins
Additional Inspector

Evidence

Inspectors observed lessons in all classes, analysed pupils' work, scrutinised documents, met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, the senior leadership team, literacy, numeracy and science subject leaders and two representatives from the Local Authority (LA).

Context

The school became subject to Special Measures following its last Section 5 inspection in November 2007. Since then a number of improvements have been put in place including a new system for tracking pupils' progress and more formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have undertaken more rigorous monitoring of the quality of provision.

Achievement and standards

Standards in English, mathematics and science are improving. Standards in the present Year 6 are average in reading and writing and a little below average in mathematics. Staff are working hard to realise the targets that the school has set for Year 6 pupils. Recent assessments in March this year showed that Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading and writing is higher than in mathematics. As a result the school ensured that more able pupils in Year 6 received extra mathematics' tuition from a specialist teacher to assist them to reach higher levels of attainment. Since the beginning of this term all mathematics' sessions in Years 3 to 6 have been supported by a teaching assistant. More rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching in mathematics has occurred throughout the school with support from the LA. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics has been strengthened to some extent through training in the use of the renewed Primary Framework for mathematics. An analysis of pupils' books demonstrates that pupils are making more consistent gains in their learning.

Observations during the inspection show that improvements in the quality of teaching are enabling pupils to achieve more effectively. A more thorough tracking system enables staff to monitor pupils' progress adequately. The tracking system carefully highlights those pupils who are underachieving. This means staff are clearer about the pupils who would benefit from further support. The progress of pupils who have additional needs is effectively tracked. The school does not yet analyse the progress made by boys and girls in each year group or by different ability or minority ethnic groups.

Pupils' progress and standards in science are not tracked effectively. This means that the school does not have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding in this area of learning. Plans are in place to have a science tracking system in use by September this year.

This year the class with Year 2 and 3 pupils have had a significant number of temporary teachers. With two established teachers teaching them now, the class is making more consistent progress. The tracking system again highlights the fact that pupils' attainment and progress is stronger in reading and writing than mathematics. Fewer pupils than expected are working at above average levels of attainment in mathematics.

Judgement

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

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress throughout the school and especially in mathematics – *satisfactory*.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils behave satisfactorily because staff guide them conscientiously. Relations between pupils and staff are good because of the high quality care that staff take of them. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, and attendance is broadly average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound. Their spiritual awareness is developed effectively through collective worship, for instance, when they pray and sing uplifting hymns such as 'Carpenter, Carpenter make me a Tree.' Pupils learn to reflect about their own and others' beliefs thoughtfully. This is seen when pupils in Years 4 and 5 study the Bible and the life of St. Paul. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles satisfactorily because the school encourages them to eat well and take regular exercise. They enjoy many school sporting activities and value highly the awards that they have gained. The school is carefully promoting pupils' understanding of safety issues. This is evident when pupils talk about how their awareness of the hazards of fire was heightened by a visit from the fire service. Pupils handle equipment safely at break times and move about the school thoughtfully. Pupils are enthusiastic contributors in school and more widely, raising money for charities. The school council is suitably involved in improving the school and valued being involved in the selection of a new teacher. A few pupils do not have a deep understanding of how to meet their individual targets or whether they have attained them yet this term.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching is showing improvement since the last inspection. On this visit, teaching in all lessons seen was at least satisfactory. Where teaching is good, planning is matched well to pupils' needs, teachers use resources well and lessons have a brisk pace. As a result, pupils show greater interest and are more readily engaged with their learning. The overall quality of teaching is not at a consistently high enough level. This prevents pupils from making the rate of progress they need to achieve the standards expected for their age, particularly in mathematics. While the provision for those who find learning difficult is good, not enough is always expected of the highest achievers.

Planning generally is sound but there remains a lack of clarity about what teachers expect of pupils by the end of the lesson. All lesson planning shows a learning

objective and so staff are clear about the focus for learning. It is discussed and displayed suitably so that pupils can look back at it throughout the session. This assists pupils to concentrate suitably on the main objective. Most lesson planning lacks sufficiently clear and sharp criteria against which success will be assessed either for the whole class or the expectations for different groups of pupils. This makes it much more difficult for teachers and pupils to evaluate their success and judge the progress they have made. There are examples of teachers involving pupils in self-evaluation but without sufficiently clear criteria this has only had a rather limited impact.

A common weakness in many lessons is in the timing of the different elements of the lesson. Teachers frequently spend too much time introducing the tasks. The impact of this is to reduce the time available for independent work and for the review session at the end of the lesson. This limits what pupils can achieve on their own and prevents teachers checking sufficiently on the gains pupils have made and then using this knowledge to inform future planning.

The pastoral care of pupils is good but academic guidance remains a weaker area. Some pupils remain unclear about what progress they are making towards their personal targets. This is mostly because written and oral feedback rarely refers to targets and does not consistently inform them if they have met their target in a particular piece of work. Additionally, the marking of pupils' work is too variable. All work is marked and almost all makes positive and supportive comments. Not enough attention is given to clearly identifying for pupils what is particularly good about their work or the commonly recurring errors they make. Where teachers do identify areas for improvement, too often these are not followed up sufficiently well in the planning for subsequent lessons.

Curriculum planning is undergoing a radical rethink at present in a move from specific subject teaching towards a more thematic approach. This will need careful planning and coordination to ensure that the key strands of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and science remain a clear focus for skill development. At present, plans indicate that mathematics as an identified area of weakness will remain a discrete subject. To improve progress in mathematics, the school has used support from the local high school for pupils in Year 6. The whole school has undertaken training in how to use the new tracking system and evaluate pupils' progress more effectively. Additionally, there has been training for the Year 6 teacher in preparation for national tests and for the teacher in Years 3 and 4 on raising attainment.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school and particularly teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics – *satisfactory*.

Leadership and management

The school's leadership has worked carefully to address all three key areas for improvement. Self-evaluation is more accurate and thorough. This is because the schools' leadership is monitoring the quality of education more effectively. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is improving satisfactorily. All teachers have been observed whilst teaching mathematics. This enabled the mathematics' leader to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the ways teachers are delivering mathematics sessions. Further monitoring activities have allowed the mathematics leader to evaluate satisfactorily pupils' work in books. Mathematics targets have been introduced for all pupils but their use in lessons has not been evaluated thoroughly. The evaluations made of teaching are thorough but do not consistently focus on impact, for example, they do not outline what progress different groups of learners have made in a lesson.

The tracking system is allowing the school's leadership to adequately identify how well pupils are progressing. The school is aware of year groups where progress is weaker. The school has used the system to pinpoint the progress made by pupils with additional needs. The school's current methods of tracking pupils' progress does not easily help the staff to calculate average point scores for each year group and understand where standards are compared with national expectations. The new system does not consistently record pupils' progress from Years 3 to 6 accurately. This means that the school is getting a rather more positive picture than is really the case. This mechanism does not provide information about progress made by each class and so it does not assist the school's leadership to evaluate future training needs.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked really thoughtfully together to improve the school. They, with the support of the whole staff, are keen to improve the quality of education. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been involved appropriately in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. They are both highly focused on raising pupils' rates of progress and the strategies which can be used to achieve this. This summer the school is on track to see some significant improvements in standards in Year 6 tests.

School improvement planning is sound and outlines when and who will carry out the tasks and who will monitor the actions. A good overview sheet explains which aspects have been completed and those which are still in the process of being worked on. This document contains a sound timetable for self-evaluation activities each half term. The plan does not consistently set achievable criteria against which the school and governors can measure and celebrate success.

The management of pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. The school's leadership gathers weekly information about pupils who are behaving appropriately and those who are misbehaving. The record sheets are too complicated and do not allow the school's leadership to identify quickly patterns of behaviour or pupils who are exhibiting challenging conduct.

Governors are now more formally involved in monitoring the work of the school. They have audited their own work and identified areas for improvement. The

governors were involved in a monitoring day where many came in to evaluate the quality of provision. As part of this evaluation they interviewed some pupils about their enjoyment in school activities. The governing body and headteacher have agreed an improved format for reporting on developments and successes within the school. The governors evaluate a suitable range of information on pupils' standards and progress in Years 2 and 6 but not in other year groups. Governors have formed sub committees and are establishing a more rigorous system to up date school policies. The child protection policy has not been reviewed recently and it does not explain fully how possible allegations about the staff at the school will be investigated.

Judgement

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

- Improve the leadership and management so that leaders at all levels monitor standards and the quality of provision rigorously – *satisfactory*.

External support

Support from the local authority outlined in the LA's statement of action meets requirements. Senior leaders and governors reported favourably on the quality of support the school is receiving from the link adviser, a specialist teacher and the school improvement service. A core action group continues to meet each month to monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making. At these meetings the school is expected to provide evidence of the impact of the actions taken to bring about improvements. A strong emphasis is placed on evidence from outcomes. The use of ICT is improving as a result of LA training and materials. Drama provision in the school is being enhanced significantly due to LA support.

Priorities for further improvement

- Develop the use of specific criteria in lessons against which pupils and staff can easily evaluate their success.
- Improve the use of individual targets and teachers' oral and written feedback so that pupils have a deeper understanding of how to improve their work.
- Develop the monitoring of teaching so that it focuses more deeply on learners' outcomes.
- Refine the tracking system so that it effectively informs staff and leaders each term about different groups of pupils' progress and standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by class and year group.