

Cambridge Education  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01223 578500  
Direct F 01223 578501  
risp.inspections@camb-ed.com



3 December 2008

Mr Tony Hull  
West Earlham Junior School  
Scarnell Road  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR5 8HT

Dear Mr Hull

Special measures: monitoring inspection of West Earlham Junior School

Following my visit with Catherine Stormonth, Additional Inspector, to your school on 24 and 25 November 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

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

Progress since being subject to special measures - good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

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 Interim Executive Board (IEB) and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk

Yours sincerely

Godfrey V Bancroft

Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of West Earlham Junior School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 November 2008

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with pupils, the headteacher, the school's senior leadership team, subject leaders, a representative of the school's IEB and the Local Authority (LA) .

## Context

Since the last monitoring visit, in July 2008, several staff changes have taken place. The deputy headteacher has been promoted to a headship. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed. They are currently working in partnership until the existing deputy takes up her new post in January 2009. Three teachers have left the school and two others, one permanent and one temporary teacher, are scheduled to leave at the end of term. Two have been replaced on full time contracts and others by members of staff on fixed term contracts, with the possibility of becoming full time following successful induction. The subject leadership team has also been re-structured.

The IEB is fully in place. It remains likely that the headteacher and the IEB will remain in place until December 2010. Whilst the position from this time is not finalised, discussions to amalgamate the school with the adjoining infant school are in progress.

## Achievement and standards

Progress in lessons is now frequently good, which is directly linked to marked improvements in the quality of teaching. In 2008 standards, as revealed by the unvalidated results of the national tests for the end of Year 6, were well below average and not as good as in 2007. Standards in English lagged behind those in mathematics and standards in science were very low. A significant proportion of pupils failed to make the progress expected of them and achievement overall was inadequate. This was mainly because the systems introduced to raise standards had not had time to become sufficiently embedded and were not applied consistently by some staff. Over recent times these systems have become far better used by teachers and a more positive picture is emerging for 2009. The work seen in lessons, in pupils' books, and shown by the school's increasingly robust assessment systems clearly indicates that pupils, in the current Year 6, are on course to attain standards that, whilst below average, are likely to be a significant improvement on 2008. The school now has accurate systems to track pupils' progress. These show that while nearly all pupils have made at least satisfactory progress from their various starting points a significant number now make good progress, particularly in years 3, 4 and 5. This is attributable in part to the increased enthusiasm shown by pupils for their

learning, improvements in their speaking and listening, and work set by teachers that is better matched to pupils' needs and abilities. The school has a much higher percentage of pupils with learning difficulties than usually found, but many of these pupils are making good progress. Even so, there are still some inconsistencies in pupils' progress and in standards. For instance, whilst standards in science have improved markedly those in English are proving relatively harder to shift. Even so, the concerted focus on developing basic skills in this subject is paying dividends.

### Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement: Raise standards in English, mathematics and science

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory

### Personal development and well-being

The improvements made to pupils behaviour and to their attitudes to learning continue to be a positive feature of the school's work. In the past it was evident that many pupils did not particularly enjoy school and were not very enthusiastic about their learning. This is no longer the case. The majority now listen intently, are eager to be involved, keen to answer questions and participate in discussions.

Pupils confirmed strongly that the behaviour management systems are carried out consistently, are 'tough but fair' and are very effective. Pupils said that 'less disruption in lessons makes everyone feel better and enjoy their work more.' There is clear evidence of pupils taking more pride in their work and the obvious pleasure this gives them. Presentation is improving rapidly as pupils respond to teachers' higher expectations to produce work of a better quality and greater quantity. Pupils believe that the quality of school life is good and they feel safe and happy.

Procedures for improving attendance are good and the school rigorously follows up absence from the first day onwards, though attendance rates are still too low, depressed by recent bouts of flu and stomach bugs affecting many pupils . The few pupils with poor attendance are investigated and supported by the school and local Attendance Officer. All reasonable avenues are followed to try and improve their attendance with mixed results. In extreme cases steps are taken to prosecute and this has proved to be an effective deterrent for the worst attendees. Punctuality has improved significantly and the start of the school day is no longer disrupted by latecomers. The first lesson starts promptly and little learning time is lost through lateness. Pupils are more aware of the importance about arriving on time as an important life skill.

### Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Develop a wider range of more rigorous strategies to encourage better attendance – satisfactory

## Quality of provision

There has been a significant improvement in the amount of good teaching. Lessons in which teaching is inadequate have been eliminated. During this visit some teaching in English and mathematics was judged to be outstanding.

Teachers now have consistently high expectations of how pupils will behave and respond. Pupils, for their part, invariably respond superbly. Positive relationships between pupils and staff are a significant feature. Pupils' efforts and successes do not go unrecognised. Because of this many pupils are becoming much more confident about their learning. They are not afraid to make mistakes and are prepared to take risks when they answer questions. Pupils confirmed strongly that lessons are more 'fun and interesting' and not disrupted by misbehaviour. Senior managers have provided staff with the strategies they need to manage behaviour consistently and effectively when incidents occasionally occur. Support staff are well deployed to help those pupils with behavioural difficulties and to enhance their learning.

Teachers are consistent and skilful in making certain that pupils understand what is expected of them and what they are going to be learning. Work is matched with increased accuracy to pupils' learning needs and abilities. Teachers often split learning into bite sized chunks which helps pupils to sustain their concentration. They also draw effectively on pupils' own knowledge and prior learning, frequently revisiting topics to ensure that pupils' understanding is consolidated. Teachers involve pupils well in assessing and understanding their own progress and that of their fellow pupils. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning using, amongst other strategies, 'traffic light' signals to make sure they understand the lesson content. This enables staff to target more support to ensure all pupils are developing new knowledge, skills and understanding effectively. Staff also make sure that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Marking is detailed, frequent and provides pupils with good advice. Teachers are good at developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussion and through the careful phrasing of questions. This is a key feature underpinning improvements in pupils' progress.

The best teaching typically engages pupils and inspires them to work hard and make rapid progress during the lesson. The previous passivity seen at the last monitoring visit has gone and is replaced by enthusiastic learners who enjoy and are becoming confident enough to actively participate in lessons. For example, in a geography lesson, Year 6 pupils asked some searching questions of a member of staff with substantial knowledge of the locality. Some lively discussions ensued where pupils were able to express and share their views about community issues.

The curriculum has been modified to ensure enough time is given to developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy that pupils need. For example, the school's

policy for teaching letter and word sounds each day is paying dividends and starting to improve the rate of progress in English. The opening of the new computer suite means that the school is now much better placed to help pupils acquire the basic skills of information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum is managed effectively to respond to the needs of the many lower attaining pupils and those who experience learning difficulties. For example, pupils work in small groups or receive individual support, often led by teaching assistants, which meet their needs well.

### Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve teachers' skills in managing pupils' behaviour so that more effective learning can take place – good

### Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior managers play a strategic and effective role in bringing about improvements. There is a clear vision of where the school is going and how it will get there. Their own expertise is supplemented by the wise use of external support, which helps to ensure that the performance of the school is evaluated accurately. Plans for the school's continued improvement are carefully thought out. These plans reflect the efforts of all interested parties and accurately identify what needs to be improved, how the improvements will be brought about and how they will be evaluated. The concerted effort to recruit able and talented teachers is proving to be successful and is impacting positively on the rate of pupils' progress. Recruitment is also backed up by effective induction procedures.

The leadership is continuing to make effective use of the available data as a basis for measuring the performance of the school and identifying any shortfalls in the progress of individuals or groups of pupils. The messages emerging from the gathered data are scrutinised rigorously. Procedures to accurately track the progress of individual pupils are used effectively by all teachers and are now well established.

The subject leadership group has been re-organised and includes some new members of staff. They are blossoming in their roles. They are knowledgeable about their subjects, provide good support for their colleagues and have a clear vision about how provision can be further improved.

### Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure the school's leadership make better use of all the available data for monitoring and assessments to improve the provision and set challenging targets for pupils – good

### External support

The support provided by the LA, the school's improvement partner (SIP) and members of the IEB is good and has contributed directly to the marked improvements evident in many areas of the school's work. The SIP provides effective support in guiding the school in its self-evaluation and in identifying areas for further improvement. A member of the IEB, who is headteacher at another school, is contributing regularly to monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and to ensuring that all members of the IEB are well-informed about the school's work and progress. Specialist subject advisers from the LA continue to provide valuable advice which has also led to improvements, for example in the raising of standards in science.