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3 April 2009

Mrs J Wells
The Headteacher
Nyewood CofE Junior School
Brent Road
Bognor Regis
West Sussex
PO21 5NW

Dear Mrs Wells

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Nyewood CofE Junior School

Following my visit with Gail Robertson, Additional Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 March 2009, 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 October 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Overall 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 chair of governors, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester.

Yours sincerely

Michael Burghart
Additional Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Nyewood CofE Junior School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 March 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' books, and met with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, and representatives from the local authority and diocese.

Context

There have been no changes in permanent staffing since the last inspection. However, two teachers have been on long term sick leave, one of whom is now on a phased return to work programme. Their classes have been covered by temporary staff. Prior to Christmas a further member of staff was off for a prolonged period.

Achievement and standards

In the five months since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory review of planning for literacy and mathematics designed to present work at different ability levels in each class. This is providing the basis for pupils to make appropriate progress. Teachers' expectations are higher than were reported in October 2008 and planning generally builds upon previous work. Examples of good progress in the application of new planning were seen in some Years 5 and 6 English and mathematics lessons with pupils responding enthusiastically when well challenged. However, the impact of this new initiative is variable. It is far less effective in lessons where mixed ability groups are formed from a combination of other classes to make the teaching groups smaller.

School records show that more pupils are on track to achieve the nationally expected rates of progress in both writing and mathematics. This constitutes satisfactory improvement, but progress is not consistently secure in all lessons. The most notable exceptions observed were in some Year 4 and Year 5 sessions where work tended to be too difficult or too easy and the pace set by teachers was too slow. Standards overall are still below what pupils might be expected to achieve based on their starting points on entry to Year 3.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards and achievement especially in writing and mathematics by ensuring that lessons are planned to provide activities that match precisely the needs of pupils of all ability levels – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

These aspects were not a main focus during this visit. However, despite a few pupils who can and sometimes do present problems, it is clear that behaviour is

satisfactory overall. There are good features in lessons which capture pupils' imagination and give pupils of all abilities opportunities to show independence as well as work together. In most lessons pupils' attitudes are positive. Pupils' response to extra-curricular opportunities, visits and visitors is good. Pupils spoke particularly enthusiastically about taking part in the forthcoming production of 'Wind in the Willows' and about the range of clubs on offer. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is, as at the last inspection, satisfactory. Pupils note that some lessons are 'boring' with introductions 'too long'. However, they report that there is some improvement, with an increase in the proportion of lessons where work is presented in interesting ways. A good example is in the Year 6 work on Egypt which provides an excellent vehicle to extend the pupils' writing skills.

Quality of provision

With the help of the local authority, the school has set up sound systems to assess and track pupils' performance. Data is being collected in English and mathematics. This is analysed satisfactorily to show rates of progress and most staff are being drawn into a process of moderation to ensure that judgements are shared and accurate. Senior staff have a secure understanding of standards and are beginning to identify the reasons for underachievement.

Coordinators for literacy and mathematics are using data to inform their planning with the intention of building on what pupils know and can already do in the next phase of their learning. Learning objectives are now made clear to pupils in all lessons. Although teachers have started to use a common planning format, which allows for work to be presented at different ability levels, it is not used consistently and this reflects inadequacies in the quality of teaching. Four of the lessons observed during this inspection had inadequate features.

Improvements based on better tracking and analysis are proving effective in lessons where teachers use shared plans creatively to stimulate pupils and tailor the work to the needs of individuals. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils made rapid progress in descriptive writing because of the teacher's enthusiasm and clear understanding of each pupil's capability. Work sprang from drama and captured pupils' imagination. However, when the same planning was used in a literacy group with pupils of similar ability drawn from the two Year 5 registration classes, pupils did not have the same opportunities. They made much less progress and did not experience the same level of enjoyment.

There has been satisfactory progress in introducing regular assessments which can be used as a basis for target setting for improvement in English and mathematics. This successfully builds on the effective systems to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are aware of these targets and, in classes where support and guidance are most effective, they are beginning to be helped to use them to gauge their own progress. Where targets are specifically relevant to the individual pupil and form the basis of a good marking dialogue between teacher and pupil this works well. Where targets are generic, for example, 'I will learn my six

times table' with no notion of how and when success will be judged, they have little impact. The school has made satisfactory progress in agreeing a new marking policy, but this has yet to have full effect and is not followed consistently in all classes. This is most obvious in some Year 4 and Year 5 books.

This monitoring visit did not focus directly on improvements to the curriculum but inspectors were able to judge that satisfactory progress has been made. There are models of good practice, particularly in Years 5 and 6, that show how learning can be enlivened through topics in cross curricular themes with pupils' enjoyment and independence fostered. Changes to the curriculum are still underway as all staff have not yet fully embraced the new approach.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- develop rigorous systems to track and analyse pupils' progress to provide information that precisely informs teachers' planning and target setting – satisfactory
- improve the curriculum by providing more interesting and exciting activities to boost pupils' enjoyment, motivation and interest in learning – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection a satisfactory range of systems have been introduced with a view to developing the school's self-evaluation. However, these have yet to have the desired effect on guaranteeing the quality of education on offer. They have not drawn all staff, some of whom are in denial in terms of their contribution to the judgement that the school requires special measures, into the process.

Responsibilities are not clearly enough defined and this makes it difficult for governors and senior managers to hold staff to account especially with reference to outcomes in pupils' performance. Governors and staff do not sufficiently analyse the impact of decisions taken. For example, they have not effectively considered the value for money of staffing arrangements designed to support extra teaching groups in terms of improvements to pupils' standards and achievement.

Senior leaders are well aware of the school's deficiencies but have yet to establish ways of overcoming some of the more deep rooted problems. For example, the school's monitoring of teaching shows a satisfactory awareness of where inadequacies are, but leaders have not successfully determined how these are to be dealt with. Consequently, whilst there are some positive features, the overall profile of the quality of teaching remains inadequate with notable weaknesses in pace, pupils too often inappropriately challenged, inconsistencies in how targets are set, and work not marked according to school policy.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- develop more effective monitoring and self-evaluation systems so that the school can more exactly pinpoint what needs to be done to improve provision – inadequate.

External support

The school benefits from the good support of officers from the local authority. This is detailed in its statement of action. Leaders and managers have been given practical help with strategic management particularly with regard to action planning, school improvement and staffing issues. A consultant headteacher visits the school to work alongside the headteacher on a weekly basis and there are plans to increase this to two days a week next term. This augments the work of the School Improvement Partner who continues to work with the senior management team on planning for the future. The governing body has been strengthened with an additional local authority governor and a Diocesan foundation governor both of whom have considerable experience of governance. Subject consultants for English and mathematics continue to give advice and model good practice. Whilst it is too soon to see significant improvements to pupils' achievement and standards, support is underpinning the satisfactory developments to planning and assessment and prompting changes to the curriculum and teaching styles.

Priorities for further improvement

Although there are several areas where improvement is satisfactory progress in some key aspects is still inadequate. In order to sustain satisfactory progress for the next monitoring visit, greater focus is required on securing leadership and management and improving teaching and learning.

- Improve the quality of leadership, management and governance of the school by articulating a clear vision to help staff take ownership for improvement.
- Provide good quality monitoring and coaching of staff in order to bring about quickly significant improvements in the quality of teaching
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory by ensuring that: all pupils have equal access to the same opportunities to enjoy and extend their learning; all teachers consistently make use of pupils' targets and mark work to show how improvements can be made and lessons move with suitable pace and pupils are appropriately challenged.