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16 July 2009

Mrs R Linford (Operational Headteacher) and Mrs S Jones (Strategic Headteacher)  
The Acting Headteacher  
Nyewood CofE Junior School  
Brent Road  
Bognor Regis  
West Sussex  
PO21 5NW

Dear Mrs Linford and Mrs Jones

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Nyewood CofE Junior School

Following my visit with Gail Robertson to your school on 8 July 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second 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.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – 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 second monitoring inspection on 8 July 2009

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the acting headteacher, the substantive headteacher, parents, the chair of governors, and representatives from the local authority and the diocese. The monitoring visit focused on leadership and management, and the quality of teaching.

## Context

There have been substantial changes since the last monitoring visit.

- The headteacher left four weeks before this inspection. She is temporarily replaced for this term by an acting headteacher seconded from a local school working in partnership with a substantive headteacher who will take over the school initially for one term from September 2009.
- The deputy headteacher (who was not present during the visit) is to retire at the end of term.
- An additional governor, appointed by the local authority, has taken over as chair of the governing body; seven governors are new since the school went into special measures.
- A member of the teaching staff who was on long-term sick leave is back in school on a phased return to work programme in Year 5.
- Another teacher who was on long-term sick leave has resigned and will not be returning to work at the school.
- A Year 4 teacher is currently on long-term sick leave. Her class is being taught by a temporary teacher.
- One teacher has reduced her teaching commitment from 0.6 to 0.2 with effect from 31 August.
- The school's bursar left at Easter and has been replaced by a business manager.

## Achievement and standards

These aspects were not the main focus of the visit. Information from first hand observation in class, school data and the unvalidated results of 2009 national tests for eleven year olds indicate that standards are significantly below average. School tracking and recently much improved analysis and evaluation of pupils' performance show that progress for the majority of pupils remains inadequate. There is still widespread underachievement. However, there is evidence of some improvement this term showing that, notwithstanding problems in inconsistency between classes, new initiatives in planning for different ability levels and the use of assessment data are beginning to have positive effects.

Progress since the last visit 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 – inadequate.

### Personal development and well-being

These aspects were not investigated in detail during this visit, but conversations with parents and staff, and time spent in classrooms and outside at break, confirm that pupils' attitudes continue to be positive. Most pupils appear to enjoy school and act responsibly. Behaviour is good overall, but is negatively affected when lessons are not well paced and work is not challenging enough. Even at such times there is little outlandish behaviour. The recently introduced reward system, designed to encourage pupils' self-esteem, is having a positive impact. Pupils report that they feel valued and that there are staff they can turn to if they have problems.

### Quality of provision

The school continues to take good physical and pastoral care of pupils. Relationships in most cases are good with a positive effect on the ethos of the school.

Progress in developing the quality of teaching has been rapid in the course of this term. This is the result of significant improvement to the school's self-evaluation and now established effective monitoring of planning and delivery in the classroom. This has been particularly well orchestrated by the joint headteachers. There are clear learning objectives identified for all lessons and planning shows how pupils of different abilities are to be supported. There has been good improvement to systems that track pupils' progress and identify standards achieved. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of how to evaluate this information and this is beginning to raise expectations, especially of potentially higher attaining pupils. Strengths in how pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught, especially in withdrawal work, have been sustained with effective contributions from the special educational needs coordinator and teaching assistants. There are still weaknesses in the quality of provision, for example in some lessons when two large classes are split into three. However, planning and communication between staff now ensure that pupils have equality of opportunity in the work they have to cover. Very recent initiatives designed to encourage teachers to set targets for individual pupils have yet to be consistently applied in all classes and have not had significant effects on achievement and standards. The introduction of a common marking policy is a positive step to show pupils what they can do to make improvements. However, pupils' awareness and understanding of the system are not secure. Constant changes of teachers in some classes have not helped from this point of view.

There are examples of good teaching, for instance in Year 6, which senior leaders intend to use as models of good practice, as well as evidence of good support from representatives of the local authority. However, of the eleven lessons observed during the inspection three were inadequate and several others had features which were less than satisfactory. Typical weaknesses are in slow pace, work which does

not engage pupils' interest, and a lack of challenge. Consequently, progress in improving the overall quality of teaching remains inadequate, despite some positive signs for the future. As a result of much improved monitoring of provision by senior leaders, this judgement comes as no surprise to the school. Senior leaders are actively looking at ways to address weaknesses, for example making good use of staff performance management systems to target and support areas for development.

The curriculum was not inspected in detail during this visit. However, it is apparent that the aggregate amount of time pupils are taught each week is well below average for pupils of junior school age and this would appear to be a factor in less than satisfactory progress rates.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- 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 – inadequate
- develop rigorous systems to track and analyse pupils' progress to provide information that precisely informs teachers' planning and target setting – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

Recent changes, much appreciated by parents, have strengthened the leadership and management of the school. The joint headteachers have quickly defined educational direction and demonstrated clear ambition. In a short space of time they have effectively communicated their overall vision for the school's future. Their evaluation of strengths and the school's variety of weaknesses is incisive. They show an outstanding understanding of the school's fragility and have a very clear and accurate view of what needs to be done. Together, they are making sure that meaningful change is well managed. Progress achieved in the latter part of this term has been rapid and driven very successfully by the temporary senior leadership team, which means that progress since the last inspection is satisfactory, rather than inadequate.

There is growing use of assessment data to improve standards by raising expectations. Governors are in a greatly improved position to support and challenge the school. They are better informed through a good mix of first hand observation and by listening to staff, parents and pupils' views. Good improvement is evident in the way initiatives and spending are now evaluated in terms of how well pupils are doing. There are difficult decisions to be made in terms of how the quality of provision is to be improved and how the budget is to be balanced. But, senior leaders and governors show a determination that does them credit and sets a good example to staff. The chair of governor's view that 'the school is getting back on the

right track' is well founded, but the journey out of special measures has effectively only just begun.

Long-term success will depend very much on the stability of the leadership team. That this is yet to be established leaves the school vulnerable and is in urgent need of clarification.

Progress since that last visit 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 – good
- improve the quality of leadership, management and governance of the school by articulating a clear vision to help staff take ownership for improvement – good (as a direct result of recent changes).

### External support

Although the impact of the support detailed in the authority's action statement has been restricted by changes to the school's senior leadership team, governors and teaching staff, it continues to be effective. The school has benefited from advice and expertise as well as help with temporary senior staff appointments. There is regular effective contact between officers of the authority and the school and governors over strategic planning, budgetary concerns and staffing issues. Consultants for literacy and numeracy continue to contribute to improvements in the quality of provision.

### Priorities for further improvement

With the considerable amount of work still needed on the areas for development already identified, no further issues have been raised as a result of this monitoring visit.