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14 July 2009

Mrs Julie Hall
Mundford Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Julie Hall

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Mundford Church of England Primary School

Following my visit with Godfrey Bancroft, additional inspector, to your school on 6 and 7 July 2009, 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 November 2007. 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 Diocese of Norfolk, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Mundford Church of England Primary School.

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 July 2009.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, evaluated teaching and learning in all classes, analysed the school's tracking of pupil progress and attainment, scrutinised pupils' work in Year 3 to 6 in mathematics books and folders and the outcomes from a questionnaire sent to parents last term. They met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, mathematics, literacy and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, two groups of pupils, the Chair of Governing Body and two governors, some parents and one representative from the local authority.

Context

No significant changes have occurred to the school since the last visit and staffing is stable with one temporary teacher. The school continues to be part of the local authority 'Improving Schools Partnership'. The deputy headteacher has continued to spend more time developing the leadership of the school with the headteacher.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is improving satisfactorily. In lessons seen progress is satisfactory. Observations and an analysis of school tracking for Year 6 pupils' work show that their basic skills in literacy and numeracy develop suitably because staff use effective teaching methods. In 2008 pupils' achievement in mathematics was significantly better than in 2007. Nationally published data shows that pupils in the previous Year 6 class who left the school last year made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Provisional results indicate that pupils' achievement in the present Year 6 in Key Stage 2 is again at least satisfactory in English but is less strong in mathematics and for a few pupils it may not be in the range which is expected. An analysis of the tracking system and pupils' work shows that since July 2008, in reading, writing and mathematics pupils in Year 3 to 5 progress satisfactorily or better.

Rigorous meetings continue to be held each term between the headteacher, subject leader and class teacher to reflect on pupils' progress and attainment. Those who are underachieving are identified and extra support is put in place. A few pupils identified by the school for extra support have been given one to one tuition in mathematics. The proportion of pupils who are expected to make satisfactory or better progress each year is agreed methodically in reading, writing and mathematics for every year group and class.

A significant improvement is in the standards attained in mathematics tests in 2008 compared to the previous year. From provisional 2009 test results, standards in the present Year 6 in reading and writing are broadly average. However, standards in mathematics and science are significantly below average due to a legacy of underachievement. In mathematics, fewer than expected Year 6 pupils attain average levels of skill and this is partly because their mental mathematics skills are not well developed. In science a less than expected proportion attain the higher level 5 grade.

In Year 1 and 2 pupils' progress is satisfactory in reading, writing and mathematics due to the careful development of key skills. This means that standards are broadly average in Year 2. Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 has been average or better for the last three years.

Children make at least satisfactory progress in Reception. Most children attain average standards in the development of personal, social and emotional, linking letters and sounds, writing skills and knowledge and understanding of the world by the start of Year 1. This represents good progress in these areas of learning. Standards are a little below average in language, reading and calculation but children made satisfactory progress from their significantly below expected starting points.

Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

Personal development and well-being

Pupils cooperate with staff successfully and enjoy many subjects and projects in school. Their key skills are developing satisfactorily and so they are appropriately prepared for the next stage of education. For example, Year 4 and 5 pupils learn to use information and communication technology effectively when they add a sound track to their animations. A significant improvement since the last visit is that pupils are more regularly involved in self-evaluation of their learning towards the end of lessons. Pupils' behave well in lessons and during break times. They enjoy singing hymns and songs in assembly such as 'If I were a butterfly'. Pupils' achievements for the week were shared effectively and so all understood how particular classes have been successful in their learning. For example, it was explained that Year 6 pupils who recently went on a school journey succeeded in working together as a group, completing challenges and using their initiative. A quarter of the school developed healthy lifestyles and contribute effectively to the community by taking part in the local sports day and won first place at the event. A significant proportion of pupils came first, second or third in their races and they proudly heard their names read out in the whole school assembly. Pupils have responded well to the introduction of

a display titled 'We are building our learning power', which celebrates how they acquire and use key skills, such as sustained concentration.

Quality of provision

There is evidence of steady improvement in the quality of teaching. Teachers' planning now contains details of how the different needs of all pupils will be met, including how the most able will be challenged. This applies to lesson planning for mathematics. For the middle part of lessons pupils are taught in groups and given tasks that are appropriate for their ability. Just occasionally more able pupils still find the work too easy and their rate of progress slows. Improvements to planning and to teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics are helping younger children to do better, but it was too late to influence pupils' standards in the most recent tests for the end of Year 6. Occasionally, there are also mathematics' lessons when not enough time is spent reinforcing and building on pupils' mental and oral abilities. Even so, the good relationships between teachers and pupils and the ways in which pupils' efforts and successes are recognised means that the majority are suitably motivated and work hard.

Pupils are now involved much more thoughtfully in understanding how well they are progressing and in knowing what they need to do to improve further. Teachers take care to ensure that pupils are aware of the learning objectives for each lesson. Often the learning objective are supplemented by several expected learning outcomes at different levels which frequently challenge each pupil astutely. The oldest pupils are very knowledgeable about their targets, although some younger ones tend to be less well informed. The practice of involving pupils in target setting throughout the school remains inconsistent and sometimes the gap between the setting and checking of targets is too long. Occasionally, pupil targets in mathematics are rather broad and so they do not link well to the current topic. At the start of science projects pupils are not often set specific targets at average and above average levels of attainment and so they are not totally clear about what is expected of them.

The quality of marking is also variable. The best marking gives pupils clear advice about how to improve. In other cases it is restricted to short comments and does not provide enough information on how to improve. In addition marking is not linked closely enough to pupils' targets, meaning that significant opportunities are missed to provide pupils with guidance about how to achieve higher levels of skill. Overall, on a day to day basis assessment procedures are being used more consistently, enabling teachers to more easily identify and respond to the needs of any pupil who shows signs of falling behind.

Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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



Leadership and management

The leadership of the school is developing appropriately. The deputy headteacher continues to work well with the headteacher. They form a leadership team which is growing in strength. They monitor teaching and learning and work in pupils' books regularly. School improvement focuses effectively on areas identified for development at the last inspection. Areas for improvement outlined during the last monitoring visit have been successfully addressed. For example, the role of the governors has been developed considerably. A good school improvement plan is in use which contains specific and measurable targets. A thoughtful evaluation is successfully recorded beside each item. The school's leadership is working thoughtfully to develop a curriculum which is based on themed topics which promote many skills at one time. Daily mathematics and literacy and weekly science lessons will be maintained to ensure that basic skills are built on methodically.

Governors are highly committed to the school. They are clear about the school's successes. They are beginning to challenge the school more effectively and use improvement planning. Over half the governors have carefully monitored children's learning in lessons with local authority support. They are successfully involved in updating the self-evaluation form but are less clear about what proportion of pupils are working at expected and above average levels of attainment in each year group and whether they are making satisfactory progress.

Parents spoken to by inspectors were positive about the school and improvements to the provision. The school's leadership surveys parents carefully and acts suitably on their comments. For example, a few parents wish to have more information about their child's progress. So the school plans to refine their interim report form which is sent out at the end of the autumn and spring term by ensuring an evaluation of children's progress is recorded more clearly. Also this report form will evaluate children's attitudes to learning so that parents will gain more knowledge about how much effort their child gives to work in lessons. The school's leadership recognises that it could do more to involve parents in supporting pupils' learning in mathematics and plans to ask parents for possible ways to do this.

Throughout the school, self-evaluation is improving satisfactorily and so leadership at all levels is increasing gradually. This means that the subject leadership of literacy, mathematics and Early Years Foundation Stage is improving aptly because the leaders are more effectively involved in evaluating standards and pupils' progress each term and over a school year. Monitoring is used more systematically. For instance, lesson planning is evaluated by the literacy leader to ensure that extension for more able pupils is built in efficiently.

Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

The local authority continues to give effective support to the school but it has yet to have a full impact. Every month a meeting is held to evaluate educational provision for school leaders with the local authority which carefully monitors improvement. One teacher is working with an advanced skills teacher. However, not all teachers in Key Stage 2 have had the opportunity to work with an advanced skills teacher so that they can enhance their skill in mental mathematical development and science more successfully. Assessment activities in Year 2 have been strengthened as a result of the local authority checking that end of year teacher assessments are accurate. Staff have completed training to refine the use assessment in Year 2, 3 and 4. Extra funding means pupils who are underachieving are supported more successfully and the leadership role of the deputy headteacher has been enhanced significantly. Pupils' understanding of their targets was explored carefully by the headteacher with support from the local authority adviser. A thorough report of this activity was fed back to staff with recommendations for them on what to do to heighten pupils' knowledge of what they needed to do to improve their learning.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve pupils' mental mathematics skills ensuring that teaching develops their understanding and quick recall rigorously.
- Make sure that pupils' personal targets in mathematics and science are more specific so that that they are used to increase their rate of progress in each topic.
- Enhance parents' involvement in children's mathematical learning so that pupils learn to use their skills in a variety of situations.