

Serco Inspections  
Boundary House  
2 Wythall Green  
Way  
Middle Lane  
Birmingham  
B47 6LW

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk    **Direct T** 0121 683 2033  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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Mrs Alex Lightbown  
Aslacton Primary School  
Church Road  
Aslacton  
Norfolk  
NR15 2JH

Dear Mrs Lightbown

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Aslacton Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11–12 November 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 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 and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

**Special measures: monitoring of Aslacton Primary School**

## **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 11–12 November 2009**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, a group of governors, a group of parents and local authority representatives.

### **Context**

The new partnership headteacher took up her post in September 2009. There have been some other staffing changes due to a teacher leaving the school which has had an impact on class organisation from the start of the autumn term.

### **Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

Children enter Reception with skills around those expected for their age. They make good progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.

Pupils generally start Year 1 with slightly above average standards. In 2009 Key Stage 1 results show that standards in reading and mathematics are above average whilst standards in writing have fallen and are below national expectations. This is a result of more robust teacher assessment of writing and also the very small cohorts of pupils whose ability varies from year to year. The schools own robust data indicates that progress across Key Stage 1 is good. Observation of lessons shows that pupils have adapted well to the new class organisation and tasks are mostly well matched to pupils' abilities.

Unvalidated results from Key Stage 2 tests show that standards have risen in English, mathematics and science and are now above average. Overall the progress pupils made has improved but it is still below average. However, school records show that learning is becoming more established, particularly in Key Stage 2, and this is confirmed through classroom observations and work in books. Pupils are now making better progress in lessons and overtime in Key Stage 2. There remains a legacy of underachievement due to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and currently progress across Key Stage 2 is satisfactory.

Teachers use information about the level at which pupils are working to inform their planning however the level of challenge for more able pupils is not always sufficient. Pupils say their work is sometimes too easy. Pupils can talk about their targets in English and mathematics and feel that sometimes they do not move quickly enough to the next target. They were pleased to be able to evaluate which target was most suitable for them at the start of the term thus involving them more in evaluating their own learning. However they do not yet understand the criteria used to make judgements about the level they are working at.

### Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards in pupils' writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2. - satisfactory

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and sometimes outstanding. They are polite and courteous and engage confidently in conversation with adults. They showed reverence and respect during the minute of silence to commemorate Remembrance Day. There have been no exclusions since the previous visit. Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school. They say teachers make learning enjoyable and particularly appreciate a touch of humour in lessons. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and enjoy the wide range of after school clubs and activities provided for them.

Pupils show positive attitudes in lessons and generally collaborate well in groups or with their learning partners. Attitudes to learning are good when pupils are suitably challenged. Pupils are developing independent learning skills. However some pupils are still not confident with these because they have had limited opportunities to develop them in previous years and sometimes there is too much adult direction in Key Stage 2. Pupils need more opportunities to develop independence through being able to explore and investigate things for themselves.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching is continuing to improve. Lessons are well organised, and a range of activities are planned to meet the needs of differing abilities. However work is not always sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. Talk and learning partners are used well to ensure every pupil gets a chance to share their ideas. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils quickly get on with the work teachers give them. Learning objectives are explained well and pupils help to decide upon 'steps to success' which they use to check that they are achieving the objectives of the lesson. However pupils say that different groups in the class should have different 'steps to success' that relate more closely to the tasks they are working on. They have rightly identified that this will add more challenge for higher attaining pupils. At times teachers spend too long talking and pupils do not start activities as soon as they could or complete enough work in the lesson.

Marking has improved and pupils say it helps them to know what they have done well and mostly explains what they need to do next to improve their work. However they are not always given time to make the improvements based upon teachers written or verbal comments.

The curriculum is being developed through linking different subjects so that pupils can use their skills and understanding in literacy and numeracy in new contexts.

### Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement at Key Stage 2 – satisfactory
- Fully involve pupils in understanding their own learning and development - satisfactory

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The leadership of the school continues to improve. The new, substantive partnership headteacher is giving a strong and relentless steer regarding what needs to be done to eradicate weaknesses. Parents say 'She knows where the school should be and it is now headed in the right direction.' Staff are fully engaged with the ambition to build upon the strengths within the school and ensure all areas are performing as well as possible. There is further work to be done in developing the role of subject leaders due to recent changes in staff and re-allocation of responsibilities. However because of the close links with the partnership headteacher's other school, they are already receiving the support and encouragement needed from experienced subject leaders and are beginning to understand what is required to lead their subject areas effectively.

Several new governors have brought fresh impetus to the governing body and governors are now attached to all aspects of school improvement. Whilst governors have increased their understanding of how to hold the school to account, they are still new to their roles and they recognise the need for further training. The very experienced governing body at the partnership headteacher's other school are supporting their colleagues well. Thanks to the appointment of the substantive headteacher, the good impact of her work within the school so far and the development of governors and subject leaders, the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The school fully complies with current requirements for safeguarding.

### Judgement

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Create a leadership team capable of developing, monitoring and evaluating the work of the school in order to raise and sustain the achievement and standards of all pupils. - satisfactory

## **External support**

The local authority continues to provide good support for the school. Primary strategy consultants work alongside teachers to support planning and teaching. The school adviser ensures the school is continuing to improve.

**Priorities for further improvement**

- Increase the rate of learning and progress for all pupils in Key Stage 2 particularly higher attaining pupils in writing and mathematics.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better.
- Ensure that teacher assessment of pupils' ability always informs planning especially for higher attaining pupils.
- Continue to develop subject leaders so that they are confident in being fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation of their subjects.