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16 June 2010

Mrs R Welch
The Acting Headteacher
Waterman Primary School
The Boulevard
Rochford
Essex
SS4 1QF

Dear Mrs Welch

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Waterman Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 and 15 June, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since the last inspection - good

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 Essex.

Yours sincerely

David Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Waterman Primary School



Report from the first monitoring inspection on 14–15 June 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher and the acting headteacher. HMI held meetings with nominated staff, the chair of the governing body, the head of the onsite Sure Start Children's Centre and representatives from the local authority.

Context

The local authority has confirmed that the support provided by the headteacher of Wickford Church of England VC Infants, as executive headteacher, will be available in 2011. The Year 3/4 teacher accepted the role of special needs coordinator on 22 February and has enhanced the school's work with multiagency support teams. Two experienced teachers have been appointed; they will take up their posts in September 2010.

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

The school's robust assessment database was evaluated during the last monitoring inspection. There is clear evidence that pupils are now making significant progress. Thirteen of the seventeen pupils in the Year 5/6 mixed-age class have progressed by a year in the last 6 months and all pupils are making the progress that might be expected given their age and ability.

Pupils were entered for the Year 6 national tests and the Year 2 teacher assessments; the results from the latter being moderated by the local authority. A complete evaluation of these outcomes will be conducted during the autumn term inspection.

Progress since the last inspection

- Raise expectations of what pupils can achieve through setting challenging targets and checking that everyone is working to their potential – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Attendance continues to improve and current data indicates that attendance is just above the national average; a notable improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have responded well to the attendance incentives programme, the instant text reminders to parents, and the home visits by senior staff.



Similarly, behaviour continues to improve. In lessons, the pupils' attitudes to learning are now positive and this was particularly noticeable in the Year 3/4 class, where the class teacher and support staff have built an effective learning environment. The chair of the governing body and senior staff has made significant efforts to engage with parents. Their work in collaboration with the onsite children's centre and nursery has been key to the rising rate of attendance and the significant reduction in persistent absence.

The significant improvement in parental involvement in the life of the school, for example, sponsored events, the newly formed parents' association, and coffee mornings have all had a positive impact on the ethos of the school and the cohesiveness of the community. Parents are now coming into school to develop their own learning and academic confidence; this is having a positive effect on their children's progress.

Progress since the last inspection

- Improve the rates of attendance and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils – good.

The effectiveness of provision

The school has a well-structured programme for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. HMI observed teaching in all available age groups and compared the outcomes of these observations with those conducted by senior staff in recent weeks. The accuracy of the school's monitoring and evaluation of teaching has been a key factor in the improvement of provision across the school.

The most effective teaching guided pupils through a series of well-structured tasks and returned to the key learning objectives in an engaging final session that reminded pupils of what they had learnt and understood. In a good Year 3/4 mathematics lesson, the two age groups came together for the final part of the lesson on graphs. Good use was made of a large scale graph that had been laid out on the floor to reinforce the use of key vocabulary. As the pupils' responses became more accurate, staff extended the challenge by requiring pupils to provide subject specific sentences that explained the data recorded.

The school makes good use of its excellent swimming pool facilities and HMI observed how the clear instructions of a specialist teacher were helping pupils to make rapid progress.

A scrutiny of pupils' books confirmed the accuracy of the school's assessment arrangements and the improvements made in the quality of marking. The use of assessment to enhance learning continues to improve. The local authority Key Stage 1 moderator commented positively on the range of data available, the involvement



of other adults in supporting assessment and the evident impact of professional development courses on the assessment of reading. All assessments were agreed by the moderator, who commented positively on the school's accurate use of National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage assessments.

Progress since the last inspection

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by raising the level of challenge, giving pupils more responsibility for their learning and improving the climate in which they work – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Effective leadership and management have improved teaching and learning, eliminating the previous weaknesses in provision. The assessment database that has been developed compares very favourably with the best primary practice. Similarly, the improvements secured in attendance and the impact on pupil progress has been vital to the improvements secured.

Reductions in staffing have been well-managed by senior staff and the governing body. The chair of the governing body has worked hard to develop good working relationships with the onsite children's centre and private sector nursery. These efforts, combined with her very strong community connections, have produced a notable increase in the numbers of pupils on roll in the Foundation Stage.

The chair of the governing body's position as parent governor is not unusual in a primary school. As an experienced teaching assistant, she also brings a clear perspective to the school improvement discussions. The chair works very well with both the acting headteacher and the executive headteacher and good sub-committee structures have been put in place to deal with the delegation of responsibilities where any potential conflict of interest/connectivity issue might arise in the future. The community focussed work of the chair of the governing body is a vital aspect of the school's capacity to improve.

Progress since the last inspection

- Focus leadership and management at every level on contributing effectively to school self-evaluation in order to raise pupils' achievement – good.

External support

The successful partnership established with Wickford Church of England VC Infants, negotiated and supported by the local authority, has been the key to the progress made this academic year. The authority's commitment to continue this support into



2011 is a positive step towards the removal of 'special measures'. Similarly, the range of opportunities being provided for the acting headteacher to be 'fast tracked' towards her NPQH accreditation is enhancing the school's capacity to improve.