

PROTECT-INSPECTION



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Mrs Sue Parker
Headteacher
East Wittering Community Primary School
Stocks Lane
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Dear Mrs Parker

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 September 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks also to the pupils and governors who met with me.

Since the last inspection, the school has been supported by a range of local authority personnel, including a consultant headteacher. Two teachers have left and one has returned from maternity leave. The number of classes has reduced by one due to a changing distribution of pupils in age groups. The total pupil number is unchanged. Two governor vacancies have been filled and the governing body is at full strength.

As a result of the inspection on 26 January 2010, the school was asked to improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics through better use of assessment information, and to improve its development planning by more effective analysis of pupils' progress, by stating more explicitly the actions required to bring about improvement and by citing measurable success criteria.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making:

satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Pupils' achievement has begun to improve in writing and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2 where progress was too patchy. Their attainment remains below that expected for their ages but is rising as a result of better teaching. The school is focusing more closely on the achievement of different groups, such as boys, so that the overly-wide gap between their achievement and that of the girls is narrowing.

However, there remains much to do, as shown by the results of the summer term Year 6 assessments. These show an improvement in mathematics, where the school met its target for the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level, but were less positive in English where writing targets were missed for a second year. Pupils continue to enjoy learning and their good behaviour is a feature of lessons. They cooperate well together and are beginning to be more independent as learners, for example when referring to their targets for writing.

The use of assessment information to support learning has begun to improve. The school is developing better ways to establish pupils' attainment levels accurately, including the many joining at times other than at the start of the Reception Year. This information is being used more effectively to set challenging targets for pupils. Progress tracking is also sharper and is beginning to identify underachieving pupils more systematically, so as to adapt teaching and/or organise extra support. Lesson planning refers more explicitly to pupils' differing needs, although some inconsistencies remain. When pupils work in small groups, tasks are better matched to their attainment. Conversely, whole-class phases of lessons do not always engage all pupils. Some lesson introductions lack clarity about how the forthcoming tasks will enable pupils, working at different levels, to meet or exceed their targets, and some plenary discussions are not relevant to all pupils. On occasion, teachers use questioning well to assess pupils' understanding as lessons proceed, but this too is not embedded. There is a growing awareness among pupils of what their targets are and that staff want them to achieve these. They value the target reminder cards, now well established in writing and becoming more regularly used in mathematics. Marking has improved due to a new policy. Pupils are finding it more useful and are rightly being asked to respond to what is said. Where marking is still not effective, it lacks detail or clarity about what the pupil is expected to do as a result of reading it.

The improvements in teaching arise from closer monitoring of its quality in relation to pupils' progress in lessons and over time. Professional development is better linked to individual staff needs and whole-school issues, leading to the progress in assessment and other areas such as the now more effective contribution of teaching assistants. Staff have begun to share good practice more widely, for example through modelling approaches to teaching in training sessions. External partners, such as local authority personnel, are contributing to the improvements through working alongside school staff.

More accurate assessment of pupils' progress has enabled the school to sharpen its strategic planning. The revised plan aims squarely at raising attainment in writing and mathematics. The headteacher has successfully rallied the staff team around the plan. Its actions link logically to what needs to be done and there are clearer milestones to check progress toward long-term goals. Some opportunities are still missed, however, to include explicit targets for pupils' attainment in the plan and in the way staff are held to account. The governors are providing better support and challenge. They visit more often to check the progress being made and have greater involvement in evaluating the school's progress. They have received some useful

training and are determined to help the school, but recognise that they need a better understanding of how to use assessment information to check the impact made on pupils' progress.

The local authority statement of action was judged as requiring improvement when submitted after the last inspection. It has been suitably amended and is now fit for purpose because is clearer about the actions to be taken by local authority staff and the evaluation of their impact on the school. The locality link officer and consultant headteacher are building the school's capacity for improvement while offering judicious support and guidance. They are helping staff make better use of their own expertise and bringing in external support as required.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector