

PROTECT-INSPECTION



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Mrs Rae Aldous
Headteacher
Whitton Green Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Aldous

Special measures monitoring inspection of Whitton Green Community Primary School

Following my visit with Piers Ranger Additional Inspector, to your school on 8–9 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Up to two newly qualified teachers may be appointed to any area of the school.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2012

- As a matter of urgency and by the end of Autumn term 2012, the headteacher and governing body should ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff by:
 - working with the local authority to make certain that pupils exhibiting extreme behaviour have no opportunity to harm others and/or significantly disturb lessons or break times
 - installing locks on the main gates to the school
 - making sure that younger pupils feel safe by listening to and acting upon their concerns, especially about racist remarks and bullying
 - providing training for teachers and teaching assistants in how to manage pupils' behaviour effectively
 - making sure that all staff follow the school's agreed policy and procedures for managing behaviour.

- Develop the roles of the deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and Key Stage 1 and 2 leaders so that they can contribute to rapid school improvement by:
 - providing them with training in how to check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning
 - delegating roles and responsibilities for areas of school improvement to these senior leaders
 - ensuring that the headteacher and governing body hold all staff to account for rapid improvement in their areas of responsibility.

- Increase pupils' rate of progress through Years 3 to 6 and most especially in Years 5 and 6 by:
 - improving teaching to a consistently good level by providing teachers with explicit training and guidance on how to assess pupils' attainment accurately and plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities
 - making sure teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and insist that pupils work to the best of their ability
 - providing teaching assistants with training on how to teach letters and sounds
 - making use of support from the local authority to help the headteacher evaluate the quality of teaching and check pupils' progress rigorously and regularly

 - using the findings to decide on the next steps to promote improvement at a good rate

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- taking action to ensure that pupils who routinely exhibit very poor behaviour do not disrupt the learning of others
 - making sure the headteacher holds teachers to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Increase the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by:
- ensuring that the special educational needs coordinator makes thorough assessments of individuals' needs and puts appropriately detailed plans of support in place for individuals
 - making sure that pupils receive the teaching and support detailed in the plans
 - providing training for teaching assistants who support groups and individuals
 - ensuring that the special educational needs coordinator checks the provision for pupils regularly and rigorously, and holds class teachers to account for these pupils' progress.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 8–9 May 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, two members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors visited classes on 21 occasions to observe teaching and learning, carry out 4 joint lesson observations with school leaders, and to observe afternoon topic sessions. All year groups were visited.

Context

Significant staffing changes have been made since the last monitoring visit. Six teachers have either left or are about to leave. Two deputy headteachers have been appointed, one responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key stage 1, the other responsible for Key Stage 2. Two newly qualified teachers have been appointed and recruitment is underway for a further teacher.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Since the last monitoring visit, the results of national tests taken in 2012 have been confirmed. These show attainment at Key stage 1 to be around average but well below at Key Stage 2. Consequently progress made was very weak.

The school's own assessment together with classroom observations and work scrutiny undertaken by inspectors, indicate that this situation is improving. Attainment at Key Stage 1 is now close to the national average and progress is accelerating. These improvements are most marked in Year 2. In Key Stage 1 those with special educational needs or disabilities make progress that is slightly lower than their peers.

At Key Stage 2 attainment is improving. The latest assessments for Year 6 indicate that, for the first time, the school will meet national minimum floor standards in English and mathematics. However the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels remains low. Differences between the achievement of boys, girls, those known to be eligible for free school meals or those with special educational needs or disabilities, are minimal.

In class, pupils demonstrate improving skills of independent learning at Key Stage 1, but have been slower to develop these skills in Years 5 and 6.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving, although inspectors observed a very small proportion that was inadequate. Since the last inspection, teachers have undertaken

much professional development especially on the assessment of learning. This is now systematic and accurate across Key Stages 1 and 2 but is still being developed within the Early Years Foundation Stage. These data are now providing the school with an accurate view of the progress of its pupils. Because of this, teachers are now able to plan their lessons to ensure that the level of the learning is pitched correctly for most pupils. This is leading to improvements in standards in mathematics and English.

Learning during afternoon project and topic work is less well structured however. Sometimes the tasks and work are not sufficiently demanding and lead to poor learning. Often, these sessions do not reinforce learning that has taken place in the key subjects of mathematics and English. In a few lessons, pupils are not able to cope with the work because it is too difficult for those who have not yet developed the necessary skills. The school is working hard to overcome this legacy, for example by improving lesson planning and providing catch-up sessions in literacy and mathematics.

Lessons are usually planned to cater for the learning of all pupils but this is not always put into practice. Often, the most able are left to their own devices during group work. This is one factor that has led to the relatively low proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels of learning. The school and local authority have provided much support to develop and improve provision for those with special educational needs or disabilities. Those identified receive support but its quality is not consistent enough. In class, the work of teaching assistants is rarely planned for and is therefore not always effective. Progress and learning for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is not monitored well enough. The documentation used has been redesigned but notes and records rarely give clear guidance on progress or next steps.

The school has introduced new workbooks that are clearly labelled with pupils' names and other details including assessments and progress monitoring. In particular, their special write books are well-presented. Pupils are beginning to take a pride in their work and were keen to show them to inspectors. The quality of marking is improving, with some very good examples seen. The systematic correction of poor spelling or grammar is not always done however.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

At the time of the last inspection the new headteacher was faced with serious issues of extreme behaviour. These have now been successfully tackled through professional development and the introduction and consistent application of new behaviour policies. The school is now calm, and those parents who were met at the school gate commented positively on these improvements. The rate of exclusions is now low, and attendance around average.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Many staffing changes have been made since the last monitoring visit. The recruitment of two new deputy headteachers has strengthened the school and enabled the headteacher to define the roles and accountability of all staff in detail. Although many changes are recent and have not yet impacted on achievement, the trend is clear. The momentum of improvement is increasing.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans are excellent. They are challenging but achievable, with clear targets and timescales. All aspects of the school are included as well as those identified in the last inspection. The school is aiming to improve in all that it does, not just those issues identified by inspectors. The school's lesson observation system is accurate and analytical, precisely identifying areas for improvement and shortcomings in learning. It is used to determine that whole-school professional development is focused on areas of need, for example accurate assessment and the management of poor behaviour. The management of staff performance is robust. All have challenging targets for which they are held accountable. The monitoring of progress towards these targets is quickly becoming well developed as assessment becomes reliable.

At the time of the last inspection the school's curriculum was very weak. Pupils were often taught at too low a level in mathematics and English. Moreover the curriculum for such subjects as art, science, history and geography was poor. The headteacher has recognised this and has done much to structure the teaching of these subjects. This is beginning to have an impact on pupils' learning. For example, in Key Stage 1 pupils study light and dark, followed by nocturnal animals, then write a report on what they have done in their project books.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors are more proactive, visiting the school to undertake useful monitoring, for example of health and safety. They are asking more searching questions and supporting the headteacher with performance management issues. However the challenges that they make and the responses to them are not always recorded in sufficient detail, notably in the curriculum group. This makes it difficult to monitor progress towards targets in that area, or to be sure that actions are completed.

External support

The school has benefited from support provided by the local authority to help with behaviour, special educational needs or disabilities, and specialist subject support for English and mathematics. In addition, the local authority has enabled the secondment of two experienced leaders and provided on-going support for leadership.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that support provided for those pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is consistently and effectively monitored together with the progress they are making and next steps.
- Ensure and monitor the effective use of teaching support staff.