

Monks Eleigh: School faces uncertain future as student numbers fall

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Monks Eleigh Primary School.

A small primary school judged “inadequate” by Ofsted could be forced to close after the board of governors resigned and nearly half of the pupils left.

Following a visit in July, Government inspectors deemed “special measures” were required to bring Monks Eleigh Primary School, near Boxford, up to scratch.

In a report published last month, lead inspector Cheryl Thompson rated the achievement of pupils, the quality of teaching, and leadership and management as “inadequate”. The only aspect to receive a “good” rating was the behaviour and safety of students.

Since September 2011, the Churchfield-based school has been part of a federation partnership with nearby Boxford Primary School, but the collaboration between the two establishments has been reviewed and is due to come to an end at Christmas.

Suffolk County Council has now confirmed that Monks Eleigh Primary’s entire board of seven school governors had notified the council of their resignations. It also confirmed that the number of students at the school had dropped from 30 to 17 since the Ofsted inspection report was published.

A spokesman said an application had been submitted to the education authority to set up an interim executive board to assume management of the school. The council is awaiting approval from Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, before this can happen.

The spokesman confirmed that closing the school was an option. He added: “With falling numbers of pupils at the school, there will be issues of viability so its closure could be a possibility. The current roll stands at 17. However, we understand that this may reduce further.”

Monks Eleigh Primary is one of the smallest in Suffolk. Pupil numbers have fluctuated over the years with a maximum of 37.