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Mrs G Denham
Marish Primary School
Swabey Road
Langley
Slough
Berkshire
SL3 8NZ

Dear Mrs Denham

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Marish Primary School

Following my visit with Helen Griffiths, additional inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 November 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2009. 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 and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – **good**
Progress since previous monitoring inspection – **good**

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed with prior agreement of the monitoring HMI.

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 the governing body and the Director of Children's Services for Slough.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009

- By July 2010, raise the standards in English and mathematics in Year 2 so that at least 80% of pupils achieve the age-expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics and in Year 6, at least 65% of pupils achieve the age-expected levels in English and mathematics combined by: identifying pupils who are underachieving and providing rigorous support for them; ensuring that teachers and leaders regularly monitor all pupils' progress and adapt their lessons accordingly; providing focused subject training for staff, especially in mathematics, to help raise the level of challenge for pupils.
- Ensure pupils in all age groups are making consistently good progress by teachers: providing good levels of challenge in all lessons; using assessment data well to refine planning of every lesson in the light of what has gone before; telling pupils what they have learnt, what they need to do next and how to go about it.
- Develop the expertise of all leaders so that they can play a full and active role in whole-school developments and thus raise pupils' achievement.
- Take steps to raise levels of attendance to the national average level by March 2011.

Special measures: monitoring of Marish Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 November 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior leaders and other members of staff. They also met with groups of pupils, a group of governors that included the chair of governors and a parent governor, and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit a number of staff have left the school and new appointments have been made. These appointments include key staff such as an Inclusion Coordinator, two deputy headteachers and an advanced skills teacher, and the temporary internal appointment of two acting assistant headteachers. As a result, the leadership and management of the school have been restructured. Similarly, the governing body has reorganised its committee structure. At the time of the monitoring visit some teaching staff were absent from school and have been replaced by long-term supply teachers.

Pupil numbers remain fairly constant, reflecting the time of the year and the staggered entry of children into the Nursery. However, mobility of pupils into the school at different times of the school year has increased. From September 2010 the school's range of extra-curricular activities, which are also available to the local community as part of the school's extended provision, came within the remit of Slough Children's University. Partnerships have also been established with others to extend provision, for example, as seen in the recently formed links with Langley Grammar School.

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

Since the last monitoring visit, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have completed national assessments and tests which took place during the summer term. The outcomes of these exemplify the impact of the school's well-focused work. For example, the standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and show an upward trend on the previous year. Similarly, unvalidated 2010 data show that pupils in Year 6 attained much better than in 2009. Improvement in pupils' attainment in mathematics is attributed to the school's different approach to the mathematics curriculum. Data show, however, that writing remains an area for improvement throughout the school, as does the achievement of more-able pupils. Work to address both issues has already begun. For example, careful monitoring of teaching and learning is identifying where greater challenge for the more able is needed in lessons and teachers are helped to make sure that

planning is improved accordingly. In respect of pupils' writing, a new approach to its teaching is now in place and the early signs show that it is beginning to make a difference. However, this is not just an issue taken up by teachers in Years 1 to 6. An audit of children's skills on entry into nursery, based on assessment information, shows that children start school with communication skills that are well below what might be expected for their age. As a result, teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage have received training in the 'Let's talk' programme to ensure that they too play their part in raising standards.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- by July 2010, raise the standards in English and mathematics in Year 2 so that at least 80% of pupils achieve the age-expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics and in Year 6, at least 65% of pupils achieve the age-expected levels in English and mathematics combined by: identifying pupils who are underachieving and providing rigorous support for them; ensuring that teachers and leaders regularly monitor all pupils' progress and adapt their lessons accordingly; providing focused subject training for staff, especially in mathematics, to help raise the level of challenge for pupils – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils talk positively about their school and the improvements that have been made. For example, pupils are clear about the rewards and sanctions in place that are used firmly but fairly to encourage them to behave well. Inspectors saw the positive impact of the school's consistently applied behaviour plan to encourage good behaviour and the fact that pupils are responding well to it. In lessons, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and work well together in small groups or in teams. They understand that they are learning how to improve their writing in a different way. However, they are not as enthusiastic about this aspect of their work as they are about lessons in mathematics. Pupils really enjoy mathematics and particularly like working with the cups that are used which they say make their work easier to understand. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the very many clubs that are on offer both before and after school and at lunchtime; it is evident that they are greatly enjoyed and appreciated. What is really impressive, however, is the pupils' clear understanding of the importance of attending school regularly. They know that it is important not to miss any of their learning and, as one pupil said, it will help them 'get a good job' when they leave school. While pupils are excited about the rewards that are given for 100% attendance, they are equally very proud of the celebration of their good attendance, which happens on a regular basis. As a result of the school's work with families and pupils, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' attendance since the last monitoring visit.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- take steps to raise levels of attendance to the national average level by March 2011 – outstanding.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching is much better than it was; there is now a greater proportion of good teaching than seen previously. The staff are working well in their different teams to maintain consistency across year groups. For example, lesson planning is monitored carefully by year leaders who hold staff to account for the quality of their lessons and the progress that pupils make. On occasion, planning is not as challenging as it might be. As a result, in some lessons pupils who are more able do not always make the progress of which they are capable. However, this is picked up and followed through by leaders who support others in order to make a difference.

Staff have benefitted from training, for example in 'Big Writing' as part of the school's work to improve pupils' attainment in writing. The early signs are positive; however, more remains to be done to enthuse pupils and develop their skills further. The school has, correctly, maintained a strong focus on mathematics, reading and writing; however, development is also planned in respect of the wider curriculum. Currently pupils benefit from the expertise of specialist teachers in music and physical education (PE). In lessons observed, the teachers' strong subject knowledge was evident and lessons went at a good pace, enabling pupils to make good progress. Pupils particularly enjoyed their outdoor PE lesson and responded very well to the outstanding questioning and demonstration that enabled pupils to practise and extend their skills. Highly effective questioning was also evident in a Year 6 science lesson and so the teacher was able to assess the pupils' understanding effectively. In some lessons, however, pupils are not engaged from the outset; too much time is spent on the carpet and teachers miss opportunities for pupils to talk to each other about their learning. However, all lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and pupils; most pupils try their best, as exemplified by their attitudes to learning and the care taken with the presentation of their work.

Much work has been done to improve the tracking of pupils' progress. Analysis of data has begun in earnest and is used well to identify where intervention is required. More is still to be done, for example, in respect of a deeper analysis of data by group, for example, for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, for boys, or for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and receive 'school action' support. Nonetheless, senior leaders know that pupils of White British heritage and those who are more able are not consistently attaining as well as they should. In response, intervention programmes for pupils who require greater support are implemented and teaching assistants, for example, have been deployed more effectively in classes as a result. The provision map of the interventions in place, implemented since the last monitoring visit, is thorough and is already supporting an improved approach to the analysis of the impact of the interventions in place.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- Ensure pupils in all age groups are making consistently good progress by teachers: providing good levels of challenge in all lessons; using assessment data well to refine planning of every lesson in the light of what has gone before; telling pupils what they have learnt, what they need to do next and how to go about it – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Much has been done since the last monitoring visit to improve the leadership and management of the school. Fundamental to this improvement is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the support provided by members of the governing body and staff. Governors have facilitated the appointment of teachers to take on key leadership posts. The restructured team are enthusiastic and well focused on the work required to ensure the school's improvement. For example, there is clear accountability through progress meetings with teachers to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. Crucially, however, the staff believe in the changes being made; staff morale is high. They are very keen to take on their new responsibilities, recognising the importance of the contribution they will make in their different roles. In this respect, subject leaders are in need of further development and more training is planned to help develop leaders and managers throughout school.

The governing body itself has been restructured. New committees have been formed to better enable governors to maintain a strategic overview of the school's work. Governors are aware of the need to improve partnerships with parents and carers and are rightly pleased with the school's success so far in this regard. Parent groups are developing well, and governors are committed to the school's extended provision and the planned work to secure the award of Investor in Families. The impact of the improved partnerships is demonstrated by pupils' improved attendance. Parents and carers are very much aware of the importance of their children attending school every day and the vast majority are supportive of the school in this respect. Governors have benefitted from recent training, for example, on data as provided by the new school improvement partner. Others have attended training as individuals and now feel better able to challenge the school as a critical friend, for example, in respect of the school's work to improve pupils' attainment in writing and the impact this has had. Governors recognise, however, that more is to be done to ensure their role to monitor and evaluate the school's work is as rigorous as it can be.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- Develop the expertise of all leaders so that they can play a full and active role in whole-school developments and thus raise pupils' achievement – good.

External support

The school continues to receive valued support from the local authority. This is provided through financial support, training for staff and governors, and the support provided by the school's adviser and in his role on the governing body. The school also reports positively on the working relationship recently established with the new school improvement partner, who is a National Leader in Education.

Priorities for further improvement

- Maintain a sharp focus on pupils' writing and assess the impact of strategies used to improve pupils' attainment.
- Ensure the challenge provided for more-able pupils is consistent throughout school and enables them to achieve as well as they can.