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12 October 2010

Mrs R Thomas
Headteacher
Filton Avenue Junior School
Lockleaze Road
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Dear Mrs Thomas

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Filton Avenue Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 5 and 6 October 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 November 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 – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

One Newly Qualified Teacher may be appointed.

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 the City of Bristol.

Yours sincerely

Susan Kara
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring learning is planned to build progressively on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding
 - using assessment information to tailor activities precisely to meet the full range of pupils' needs
 - having high expectations of all pupils
 - improving the balance of lessons so that there is less teacher talk and more pupil involvement in practical activities.
- Improve assessment procedures so that teachers can take effective responsibility for the progress of pupils in their care by:
 - adapting and improving the tracking data so it is easier to identify pupils in danger of underachieving
 - ensuring that all teachers can accurately assess pupils' attainment levels.
- Accelerate the pace of school improvement by ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels, together with governors, play a full part in:
 - monitoring the school's work, especially teaching and learning
 - identifying improvement priorities
 - evaluating the impact of their actions to raise attainment and achievement.

Special measures: monitoring of Filton Avenue Junior School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 5 and 6 October 2010

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner and a range of senior and middle managers. The majority of lesson observations were jointly undertaken with the headteacher.

Context

One Newly Qualified Teacher was appointed in September. A new local authority school improvement officer has been deployed to the school; she is also the School Improvement Partner.

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

Most pupils clearly enjoy their learning; they are keen to answer questions and to lead small groups within the class. They readily engage in role play, which was a strong element in the literacy lessons and the personal social, health and citizenship lesson observed. Pupils are working increasingly effectively together as talk partners or peer markers.

The school's detailed data tracking shows that more pupils are making satisfactory progress every year but the anomalies between classes in each year group remain too wide. The legacy of underachievement that the school identified some years ago has still not been overcome. The school did not meet its targets for Year 6 pupils who left in the summer; they reached standards that were too low. The rate at which pupils make progress is accelerating but it still does not appear fast enough. The data for current Year 6 are yet to confirm that the progress now being made in lessons will be sufficient to overcome the legacy of underachievement.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils behave well both in and around the school. There have been no exclusions this term and attendance remains at over 94%, which is broadly average.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has improved, with a greater consistency in planning for differentiated learning and a better focus on outcomes for each lesson, or unit of lessons, across all the year groups. However, teaching is not yet consistently good.

enough to for pupils to make the progress they need to match nationally expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.

The staff have developed a 'becoming a better learner' model for the pupils which sets out both the physical behaviours and mental attitudes necessary to be a good learner. This is having a positive impact throughout the school but particularly with the younger pupils. Assessment for learning is embedded in lessons and teachers are checking throughout the lesson if the pupils understand the learning objective and are achieving it. At the end of lessons teachers are sensibly revising their plans for the rest of the week to take account of where the pupils need more or less support or challenge.

The new inclusion support coordinator works jointly across the junior and adjoining infant school. This has improved coherence and continuity of provision in meeting children's needs as they move from one school to the other. Effective systems and procedures have been set up to track pupils' progress and to evaluate interventions at sensible intervals. Teachers have a much better understanding of what they should be doing to meet the range of children's needs and what is more appropriately met by external provision or short-term interventions.

The literacy plan has been amended to take account of the recent literacy review. The forthcoming focus on writing, including handwriting, is timely. The pupils are increasingly effective at writing short interesting paragraphs but their spelling is frequently poor. They do not write well at length as so far they have had too few opportunities to do so.

The opportunity for teachers meet and plan in year groups is enabling very useful professional development to take place under the direction of a year leader. This is contributing significantly to the improving quality of teaching.

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

- improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate the pupils' progress and raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics – satisfactory
- improve assessment procedures so that teachers can take effective responsibility for the progress of pupils in their care – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The senior leadership team have made progress in embedding ambition and leading and managing teaching and learning. The plans which underpin the school improvement plan are not all aligned and some are still to be completed. However, the school improvement plan has been revised to include some quantitative targets. This is enabling all managers, including the governing body, to see how quickly the

school is raising attainment. The forward planning of the agenda for staff meetings and senior management team meetings is an important improvement. The better match of professional development for the senior management team to the school's areas for improvement now needs to be extended to all staff.

A new Chair of the Governing body was elected last term and she has brought a significant improvement to the challenge that governors are able to make to the senior management team, particularly to the headteacher. The committees now have a clear focus and are being better organised.

The local authority and the governing body are right to have challenged the headteacher to work more strategically. For example, although there is a significant amount of monitoring and evaluation taking place in the school, there was not a succinct evaluation of progress since the last monitoring inspection. The headteacher accurately assessed the quality of teaching and learning in the joint observations undertaken. Although the senior management team has appropriately delegated some responsibilities to middle managers and to teachers, there is scope, and a need, for more of this if the school is to improve more rapidly.

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

- accelerate the pace of school improvement – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support and challenge to the school through the School Improvement Partner. A range of consultants are working with the school, all of whose advice the staff value and act on. The local authority is very aware of the challenges the school faces in improving quickly enough to become a school which provides at least a satisfactory education.