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Mrs H Barden
Talavera Junior School
Gun Hill
Aldershot
Hampshire
GU11 1RG

Dear Mrs Barden

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Talavera Junior School

Following my visit with Lynne Kaufmann, Additional Inspector, to your school on 9 and 10 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 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.

Newly Qualified Teachers may not 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 Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

David Collard
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, are effective in driving forward improvements by:
 - taking a more systematic, regular approach to monitoring the work of the school
 - sharply focusing on the intended outcomes for different groups of pupils and subjects
 - ensuring that all pupils' attainment is assessed on entry, regularly tracked and that data are used to inform interventions and evaluate their impact.

- Raise the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to the level of the best so that all pupils, and in particular boys, make faster progress in mathematics and writing, by making sure that:
 - work is consistently matched to the different needs of pupils
 - adults make consistent use of strategies to manage the behaviour of individual pupils
 - a range of teaching styles is used to engage pupils in their learning
 - there is consistency in the use of marking and assessment so that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve
 - systems for assessing pupils' progress and setting targets are understood by all adults and are consistently applied.

Special measures: monitoring of Talavera Junior School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 November 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the new acting headteacher, various members of the senior and subject leadership team, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

Context

Since the last visit, a new acting headteacher has been appointed, three members of the teaching staff have left and been replaced through new appointments. A new year leadership structure is in place with some teachers being moved into different year groups, with the aim of building a more coherent leadership and management system.

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

Over this term there has been a steady improvement in the rates of progress for pupils. While there are still some clear pockets of underachievement, more pupils are now making at least the progress they should. Results from national tests in July 2010 show an upward trend and this improvement in levels of progress shows signs of being sustainable for those presently in Year 6. Pupils' books show that, in most classes, they are taking more pride in their work and there is evidence that more links are being made between subjects. For example, in one English lesson the pupils were developing their learning and understanding of grammar to help them write a recipe in preparation for their work making bread in the afternoon. This is beginning to give pupils a real-life context to their work and to help them see a reason for what is being taught. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go to ensure that all pupils make up the lost ground from the past. This is particularly so for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Better provision for this group has been correctly identified as an area to develop to ensure they can all make the progress they should. Group work is better planned although this is not so secure for each individual within these groups. For instance, planning usually identifies a variety of tasks but this is not based securely on what each pupil has already achieved. Hence in any one ability group, for some it is too easy while others do not have the knowledge to complete the task successfully.

There has been notable success in improving the progress of pupils in literacy, something which is evident from the confidence with which pupils talk about phonics and grammar and also in assessments they have completed. This same level of success is not yet evident in mathematics. In the best lessons there is a noticeable

buzz of interest from most of the pupils. This was seen in one lesson where the pupils were using their knowledge of Greek culture to help them make decisions. Here, the teacher placed the onus on learning with the class and ensured they made the decisions about the best way forward. The pupils rose to the challenge impeccably.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

A positive area of the personal development of pupils is the harmony with which pupils from different ethnic backgrounds mix together. Those new to learning English or those who are joining the school settle quickly and say that they are helped by their 'buddies' and, when the need arises, through other pupils with the same first language as their own.

Although decreasing, there are still substantial numbers of boys who are not highly motivated to learn and so do not make the levels of progress that are needed. For instance, attitudes towards school, particularly for some older boys, can be dismissive as is seen in the way they answer questions or their willingness to be involved in lessons. This is a key area that the school is now trying to resolve so that pupils can get the most from their education. More positively, behaviour throughout the school has improved. There are only occasional incidents that, more often than not, are minor and therefore do not cause disruption to anybody else's learning.

At the same time as the school has become calmer and more orderly, with messages being consistently delivered, some subtle but weaker elements of personal and social education have become evident. For example, most pupils are willing to take on responsibilities, but not all of them are. Many of the prefects diligently undertake their monitorial roles with determination; just a few would rather not. Again, the school is acutely aware of the need to develop the self-esteem of some pupils and is working through social education programmes and positive behaviour techniques to improve the situation. There have been some positive outcomes, such as in the number of pupils 'on green' – those who consistently behave well 100% of the time.

The effectiveness of provision

The school has achieved its primary target on the quality of teaching set for this term. All lessons seen were satisfactory and over one third were good. As importantly, the range of teaching quality is consistent across both the upper and lower age ranges. This is ensuring that all pupils are making progress. Planning is far more comprehensive, laying out not only what will be taught but how this will be developed for different ability groups. In the very best lessons, there is also an awareness of letting the pupils think for themselves and ensuring the activities provide opportunities for this to happen. For example, in one phonics lesson, pupils were expected to decide what words would help them describe a particular situation while an animated input from the teacher inspired and challenged the pupils. This is

a positive move forward from previous visits but the school is keenly aware that there should be a higher proportion of good and excellent teaching to ensure gaps in learning are plugged. This is apparent in guided reading for instance where some older pupils use the right technical phrase such as 'imperative verb' but do not have an in-depth knowledge either of an imperative or a verb. As a result, some pupils suggested that 'now' was a verb even though the teacher explained about 'bossy doing words'.

The thorough whole-school assessments are at an early stage of being disseminated to individual teachers. Consequently, these are not yet used well enough to check that individual pupils are making progress in the short term. In addition, they do not secure an increased rate of progress to ensure pupils are at least achieving their age-expected levels. Equally, pupils are not yet clear about how they can improve through comprehensive targets or suggestions, including comments in marking, about what they should do next.

The curriculum covers all the required elements although, with the high concentration on the core subjects of English and mathematics, it is at an early stage of being developed in a cross-curricular way to make learning as interesting and motivating for pupils as possible. Extra-curricular activities are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils, as are any visits.

Pupils' pastoral needs are generally well catered for. Close links with outside agencies, such as the army family liaison, ensure that any traumas are monitored and supported. The processes for dealing with emotional and behavioural issues of individual pupils are less secure. Some systems that have been set up have not, until recently, been completed and some pupils' needs have not been fully identified. The acting headteacher, along with strong support from a specialist within the local authority, has begun a full audit of the provision for these pupils and the levels of support and care which will be provided are being reviewed in light of the findings.

Judgement

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to the level of the best so that all pupils, and in particular boys, make faster progress in mathematics and writing, by making sure that:
 - work is consistently matched to the different needs of pupils
 - adults make consistent use of strategies to manage the behaviour of individual pupils
 - a range of teaching styles is used to engage pupils in their learning
 - there is consistency in the use of marking and assessment so that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve
 - systems for assessing pupils' progress and setting targets are

understood by all adults and are consistently applied – *satisfactory*.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school has turned a corner and there is now a clear sense of purpose among all staff to make the improvements necessary. The acting headteacher has successfully taken action on the most pressing and important issues such as the provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities. The action plan for this area provides a good way forward although, as yet, its impact on pupils is very limited. A new leadership structure has been set up which places more responsibility and accountability on year group leaders. These leaders have taken on the challenge well and are in the process of ensuring that the achievement of pupils is more consistent across each class. In the classroom, the use of detailed assessments is at an early stage of development as information for this term is yet to be analysed.

Nevertheless, teachers' planning and their use of different methods and organisation have been the key to ensuring satisfactory or better teaching across the school. All this shows a more systematic and regular approach to monitoring where staff feel confident in the future and, because they are better informed, know what is expected of them. Governors are taking an active role in this process. They regularly review the monitoring, both from the school and the local authority, and are now starting to develop their own systems to help improvements. While there is more yet to be done in terms of pupils' achievement and attitudes, the school is showing initial signs of the intent and capability to make changes which are sustainable into the future.

Judgement

Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, are effective in driving forward improvements by:

- taking a more systematic, regular approach to monitoring the work of the school
- sharply focusing on the intended outcomes for different groups of pupils and subjects
- ensuring that all pupils' attainment is assessed on entry, regularly tracked and that data are used to inform interventions and evaluate their impact – *satisfactory*

External support

The local authority has continued to provide secure and intensive support to the school in a variety of ways. Overall improvements are being monitored termly with realistic analysis being provided to the school and the governing body. In addition, the high level of support for writing during last year has proved effective and so is

now being extended to mathematics. Advisors for special educational needs are in the process of helping to develop the systems and provision more effectively.