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

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Filton Avenue Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 26 and 27 January 2011, 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 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 members of the governing body, 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 third monitoring inspection on 26 and 27 January 2011

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, a group of pupils from the school council and talked with a range of staff. The majority of lesson observations were jointly undertaken with members of the senior management team.

Context

A teacher was appointed in January to replace a teacher who retired. The partnership with the neighbouring infants' school has been dissolved.

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

The majority of pupils continue to enjoy their learning. They relish the opportunity to be active in lessons and the more effective teachers ensure that lessons are punctuated with role play, pair and group discussion or movement around the classroom. The school council reported that the pupils are delighted to use the network notebooks that are newly available in most classrooms. They also value the library, which has a good range of books, all colour coded by reading age. This means that pupils can easily select books matched to their reading ability which allow them to progress through the reading scheme. The school has a wide range of clubs on offer, all of which the pupils really appreciate.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils generally behave well both in and around the school; they are well supervised at break and lunchtimes. The downward trend in exclusions continues. Although attendance fell slightly to 93.2% last term, this was still an improvement against the same term a year ago. It was 95.9% on the first day of this monitoring inspection. Pupils who are persistent absentees, and their families, are being targeted carefully by the learning mentor, who is working closely with the education welfare service.

The effectiveness of provision

There was good evidence in lessons that the 'behaviours for learning' strategy is being understood by pupils early on in their school career. Year 3 and 4 pupils were

seen to be collaborating well, working independently and concentrating for extended periods of time. Most teachers expect pupils to be able to mark each other's work or be a talk partner without any need for further explanation and the pupils rise to the expectation.

The issue identified at the previous monitoring inspection of pupils' poor handwriting is being tackled and there was good evidence of practice leading to improvement. A number of improvements have been made in teachers' marking which are increasingly constructive, making clear pupils' next steps for improvement. This is well supported by the display of National Curriculum levels or levels of challenge in pupils' books and in classrooms.

The good learning atmosphere in the classrooms is supported by teachers' effective use of interactive whiteboards and classroom display. Corridor displays are a strength of the school; they celebrate the diversity of pupil heritage, the pupils' work, the clubs on offer and the success rates of each class and individual pupils in improving their attendance.

Although a number of improvements have been made to teaching, they are not yet having a sufficient impact on learning outcomes. The quality of teaching seen was broadly similar to last time, with just over half of the lessons observed being good. This is not a high enough proportion to address the remaining legacy of underachievement for Year 6 or to ensure that a high enough proportion of pupils in the other year groups will meet age-related expectations. The speed at which pupils make progress is accelerating but not fast enough. There is not enough pace and challenge in most lessons.

While all teachers are tracking pupils' progress, not enough attention is paid to how close the pupils are to meeting or exceeding age-related expectation. Teachers are assessing average points of progress and using the Bristol tracker system but this is not having the required impact on raising standards. Lesson plans are annotated daily to reflect the learning of the previous day, but they do not make explicit how the work is to be closely matched to the varying levels of pupil ability found in each class.

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 - inadequate progress.

Improve assessment procedures so that teachers can take effective responsibility for the pupils in their care - satisfactory progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The Chair of the Governing Body is providing very strong leadership. A core of very capable governors are driving forward on school improvement; they are increasingly and appropriately challenging the headteacher about the slow pace of school improvement. The governing body is very effectively organised and has its own development plan and induction plan. A systematic review of all policies has been scheduled. Rightly, it also has its eye on the longer term future of the school beyond special measures and is looking to work more collaboratively with the local secondary and its other partner schools, as well as collaborating with another governing body.

Leaders and managers at all levels, including the literacy and mathematics leaders, together with governors, are playing a fuller part in monitoring the school's work, especially teaching and learning. A good range of intervention strategies, to support pupils who are falling behind in their learning, is well co-ordinated and increasingly effective. Joint working and planning between the inclusion coordinator and learning mentor are ensuring that pupils are getting the right additional support both in and outside of lessons.

The headteacher's evaluation of progress, although succinct, was too descriptive. The impact of actions against the three areas for improvement was not evaluated in terms of pupil outcomes. However, the school produces detailed tracking and charts on the progress that each child and each class is making. The data need to be merged together with the commentary in future evaluations of the school improvement plan.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:
Accelerate the pace of school improvement – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority is working well with the school, particularly through the work of the School Improvement Partner. A range of consultants continue to work effectively with the school. The mathematics consultant is providing essential support for those staff whose mathematics knowledge is still not secure. The local authority is mindful that much of this support will need to be withdrawn in a carefully planned way so that the school can build its own capacity for improvement.