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23 November 2010

Ms Karen Sawyer
Headteacher
Calcot Junior School
Curtis Road
Calcot
Reading
Berkshire
RG31 4XG

Dear Ms Sawyer

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Calcot Junior School

Following my visit, to your school on 10 and 11 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 November 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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 – Good

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed in the school.

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 West Berkshire Local Authority.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by making sure that work is accurately matched to their prior learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning, and share clear guidance for teachers on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning
 - setting clear direction and strengthening the role of all leaders, including governors, in evaluating the impact of the school's work on outcomes for the pupils.
- Improve the quality and accuracy of teachers' assessment so that they are able to challenge all pupils to do their best.

Special measures: monitoring of Calcot Junior School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 November 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, pupils, staff, members of the interim executive board and a representative of the local authority. The inspection was also quality assured with an on site visit for one day by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Context

The new headteacher took up her post in September 2010 after the period with an acting headteacher. The headteacher is also now the executive headteacher of the infant school which is located on the same campus.

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

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and very much appreciate the increasing challenges set by most teachers. Pupils contribute a great deal to lessons and the cooperative ethos of the school. Much of the behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Year 3 pupils make a very good start because of strong, well-planned teaching. Pupils are now making much better progress across all year groups in the school. They have responded very well to the increased expectations but are capable of even greater achievements. Unvalidated national tests results for 2010 show that the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English was just below that found nationally but the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 was slightly above national average. Pupils' attainment at level 4 or above was below national average in mathematics whilst the percentage of those attaining level 5 in mathematics was broadly in line. These results represent an overall improvement on those seen during the past years, particularly in English. Many pupils in Year 6 are making increasingly appropriate levels of progress and demonstrated in lessons their ability to develop higher level writing and mathematical skills. Work is presented well in most classes now. This is helping pupils to use their own work as a source of reference and have a greater pride and sense of achievement in what they are doing.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by making sure that work is accurately matched to their prior learning – **Good**

The effectiveness of provision

Teachers have generally responded very positively to the clear direction and support from the senior leadership team. This has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. There is a high level of commitment and enthusiasm to ensure pupils' needs are increasingly met. Pupils appreciate the hard work of staff and show a great deal of trust in the teachers. Lessons are now more focused and most staff plan learning opportunities well, considering pupils' prior understanding and how assessment of learning can be undertaken. The school is aware that further work is needed in developing assessment still further but this is underway. High levels of skill were demonstrated by many teachers in using effective questioning and ensuring the pace of lessons is brisk. Most teachers are aware of how they can contribute to further improvements and are becoming increasingly analytical about their own practice.

The school has generated an infectious passion for mathematics with pupils enjoying the learning and increasing success that is following. Teachers are increasingly allowing pupils to develop understanding along more personal and independent pathways. In one lesson a group of pupils were able to pursue their own ideas, discovering equations and ratios relating to circles. The headteacher has brought a high level of clarity to the teaching and learning of writing that has already had a very positive impact. The school has rightly focused on this aspect and pupils have again risen to the challenge, when presented, producing some work that is indicative of the higher abilities of pupils. The headteacher's experience in this area means that the school is now well placed to develop its own tailored approach to improvements. There is an increasingly consistent and improving picture of the quality of teaching emerging across the school. In Year 6 most of the teaching is very strong as some teachers are able to assess progress of individuals throughout lessons and adapt activities to maximise progress. Despite strong support for teachers across the school, some of the teaching in Year 6 does not secure sufficient progress and is less consistent with the positive development of teaching practice across the rest of the school.

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

- Improve the quality and accuracy of teachers' assessment so that they are able to challenge all pupils to do their best – **Good**

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new headteacher has brought a renewed sense of purpose to the school. This has built on the work of the acting headteacher and has allowed the senior team to ensure they can act more strategically across the school. Senior leaders are having increasing impact in moving things forward. They have a clear understanding of the issues the school faces and are able to prioritise and implement solutions effectively. The leadership of teaching and learning has been particularly strong. Effective

teaching partnerships have been established with teachers in each year group. Monitoring is regular, focussed and leads to support to improve practice. The increased monitoring ensures teachers receive focused feedback and opportunities to learn from each other. Teachers' expectations of pupils are higher and teachers are developing more personalised curriculum opportunities. The school now has a very positive ethos with a clear ambition for the future.

The interim executive board is challenging the school effectively and has a much greater strategic view. They are clear as to how they are developing monitoring systems for groups of pupils to ensure the school's development is rapid.

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning, and share clear guidance for teachers on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning
 - setting clear direction and strengthening the role of all leaders, including governors, in evaluating the impact of the school's work on outcomes for the pupils. – **Good**

External support

The school is increasingly directing the support it requires and the headteacher is clear about the timing and method of support needed. The coming term's activities are currently being planned now that the local authority has identified the resource level available. The local authority remains committed to supporting the school's development and has provided effective support to staff and leaders. The school improvement partner is working effectively with the school to monitor the progress of the school and give an external perspective on developments.

Priorities for further improvement

No further priorities are required as the original areas for development are key to sustained and rapid development in the school.