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Mrs Helen Barden  
The Headteacher  
Talavera Junior School  
Gun Hill  
Aldershot  
Hampshire  
GU11 1RG

Dear Mrs Barden

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Talavera Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 16 and 17 February 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 fourth 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 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

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 February 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, various members of staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body including the chair, the School Improvement Partner and a representative of the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the previous visit the acting headteacher has been appointed as the substantive headteacher from Easter 2011. The special needs coordinator has continued to be on long-term sickness leave and there are still some temporary and supply teachers employed to cover staff illness. Some administrative members of staff have changed since the previous visit.

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

The school's comprehensive progress information indicates that pupils are making better progress than at the last visit. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 working at the age-expected Level 4 in both English and mathematics is broadly in line with that found nationally. With better use of data information and especially from an assessment of pupils' attainment on entry to the school, it is clear that a significant proportion of pupils are making up lost ground from previous years. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, there was good evidence to suggest that a higher proportion of pupils were working at levels close to those expected for their ages. They were able to use their knowledge of perimeter and area, while in a practical session used mathematical vocabulary such as vertices and perpendicular with some confidence. However, the proportion of pupils working at levels above those expected for their ages remains lower than it should be. This is because pupils still have some confusion in their learning due to missing knowledge from the past when trying to solve unfamiliar tasks. It was exemplified in an English lesson where pupils in groups were asked to write down their ideas. Thoughtful discussion took place, but in the written reporting of these ideas the pupils were restricted by their lack of good spelling, vocabulary and general writing ability.

Specific topics and themes have been developed in lesson planning which are designed to particularly interest boys. Consequently, they can now see more relevance to their learning and their progress in writing and mathematics shows some improvement. Nevertheless, raising the attainment of all pupils in Year 6 still remains a challenge. More positively in other year groups, the progress of all, but especially boys, is improving. In Years 3 and 4, writing skills are much closer to those expected for their ages and many pupils are competently tackling more difficult mental calculations.

The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also continues to improve. The targeting of meeting the needs of these pupils more closely has been a priority and the many small group and one-to-one sessions that have been introduced since the last visit are having an impact, especially in reading and spelling. School data indicate higher levels of progress and attainment for these pupils.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Behaviour and pupils' positive attitudes have considerably improved since the last inspection visit. Evidence from lessons, break and lunchtimes confirms the pupils' opinion that the school is calm and orderly and that pupils are able to 'get on with their work much better'. In addition, there have been no exclusions this term which is a marked improvement. In lessons, there is a noticeable buzz of enjoyment when pupils are asked to work independently or in a group. At these times, most pupils concentrate well and settle down to what they are asked to do. For example, in a Year 3 lesson in the computer suite, the teacher had trouble with the software which took a little time to resolve. Pupils happily busied themselves on another task that was set and so the problem caused no delay in their learning. Attitudes towards school are better within the lower age groups where pupils have been subject to better and more consistent behaviour management since being at the school. Whilst it has improved since the last visit, there is still some silliness within the Year 6 classes where teachers have to work hard to hold attention, especially if pupils are not very highly motivated in whole-class discussions. This is having an adverse effect on the pupils' educational well-being and their ability to take all the positive opportunities pupils will have in their future schooling.

The school is working hard to develop pupils' sense of responsibility through an external specialist. This is at an early stage, although in discussion pupils are able to talk about their contribution to school decisions, such as the playground leaders.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Almost all teaching is now at least satisfactory with a growing and significant proportion of lessons that are good. Behaviour management is secure in almost all classes. Weaker teachers have improved their practice and show much more confidence in front of the class. For example, in one room where there had previously been clear tension this is no longer evident. During activities, pupils were happily engaged in their work and offered mature suggestions and ideas in a happy and relaxed manner. Teachers are having regular meetings to discuss the progress of their class and how individual cases of pupil underachievement can be resolved. This is also being used as a way of increasing teachers' understanding of how to use daily, weekly and longer-term assessment more effectively. There is more success with some than others. For instance, in one lesson the planning noted how different ability groups were to be set different tasks and about how boys were to be better engaged. However, it was clear as the lesson progressed that less account had been

taken of how well the pupils had done in a previous lesson. In a better example, the teacher had clearly looked at the work done the previous year and that done the previous day and readjusted the planning and groups accordingly. As a consequence, the level of challenge of each individual need was high. Teaching assistants provide suitable individual support and, at its best, opportunities for learning significantly increase. When this happens, pupils are guided rather than directed and have a chance to work and participate independently. Marking, while conscientious, is still not yet providing sufficient ongoing guidance to help pupils improve. On occasions, teachers note a problem and suggest ways to improve it but do not follow this up to check it has been completed. This lessens its impact. In addition, presentation in books is variable and, again, is not always followed up consistently to help improve it. Pupils are quite capable of neat, well-presented work, as can be seen in the wall displays, but this is not always the case in books. This lack of consistency in giving clear messages to pupils does not set the right tone and highest expectations for all.

Now that the quality of teaching has been stabilised, there has been a review of the curriculum but is still at an early stage of development and impact. The school has rightly started to focus on readjusting the topics and themes to make sure all pupils, but especially boys, see a purpose to their learning and to engender interest. This is also aimed at promoting better writing, mathematical opportunities and addressing the need for a wider range of different teaching styles. In one good example in a series of English lessons connected to a topic on 'The Rainforest', teachers changed activities at very regular intervals switching between whole class, small group and peer discussions and then quickly on to independent research, role play and practical activity. When this type of high quality activity happens all pupils respond very positively.

The pastoral support of pupils remains a priority. With the absence of the substantive special educational needs coordinator, the acting headteacher has taken on the role and is now being assisted by a specialist teacher and others. This has meant that procedures are more informative of the level of support needed and there is quicker intervention as and when it is needed. Pupils feel safe and secure and safeguarding procedures remain effective.

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 – satisfactory.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Since the last monitoring inspection, the school has benefited from stable leadership for the first time since the inspection in 2009. The acting headteacher has continued the good work done by others and has brought a real sense of purpose and cohesiveness to the improvements that had been started. There is realism amongst staff and a new found confidence in their ability to move the school forward. In

discussion they are clear about their role in bringing about change and there is evidence that this is impacting on pupils' achievement, for example in the improving rates of progress across many classes. Senior staff have set out well-informed plans for improvement and individual class teachers are understanding their accountability within the process. These are increasingly being used to inform a whole-school development plan, allowing a shared approach to development. Reports to members of the governing body are informative and based on a realistic appraisal of the improvement that has taken place so far. Reports are equally realistic about what still needs to be done, how this will be implemented and how these measures will address the previously identified weaknesses. Members of the governing body are becoming more confident in their ability to hold the school to account. All leaders rightly understand that sustainability is now needed in improvements to ensure that the school will securely move to becoming effective within the timescales for removal of its special measures category. This all points to an increasingly better capacity within the school to stand alone in its future development.

Regular meetings take place between all senior leaders and there is a clear structure of middle leaders that is allowing better line management of teachers. A number of teachers value this process highly, feeling that they are able to use it as a way of improving their own practice and expertise. These middle leaders are also starting a process of monitoring and evaluating the work of their year groups and to providing better continuity and equality of opportunity between classes.

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

- ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, are effective in driving forward improvements – good.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide effective support to the school. The range of external specialists being used is targeted well and is not causing the school to become confused or overloaded about advice it is receiving. Reports from these specialists and the School Improvement Partner provide a good baseline upon which the school can build. The timescales within the original plan are generally being achieved although some of the earlier predictions, such as those for the quality of teaching and learning, were a little ambitious and so have been realistically updated.