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Ms Karen Sawyer
The 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 30 and 31 March 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 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 – good.

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 Interim Executive Board 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 third monitoring inspection on 30 and 31 March 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, pupils, teachers and senior leaders in the school, members of the interim executive board, and representatives of the local authority.

Context

The school has very advanced plans in place to federate with the local infant school by Easter 2011.

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

The pupils' positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning have contributed to the strong progress made by many pupils. The cooperative culture and focused teaching mean that progress is now more consistent for all year groups. The validated national test results for 2010 show that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English was slightly below that found nationally, but the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or more was slightly higher than the national average. In mathematics, pupils reaching Level 4 or above is below the national average and broadly in line with the national average for those pupils gaining Level 5 or more. The school has set itself challenging targets and is currently on track for achieving results that would demonstrate an improving trend for attainment overall and significant improvement in mathematics since 2010. The school has focused with great success on improving writing skills. Lesson observations show how pupils are more engaged in writing, particularly when the context for learning allows for imaginative and exciting writing opportunities. For example, one class wrote about being quarantined in the school and responded well to challenging scenarios for persuasive writing. Building confidence to be bolder in their imaginative work, pupils were able to enjoy writing and were encouraged to develop further independence in thinking and in writing. Teachers know pupils well and are making much more use of their assessments to target opportunities for individuals. The formative assessments now ensure work is matched well to individual pupils' needs and is now a strength in the school.

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.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is admirable and the older pupils are very positive role models. Attendance of pupils is above average overall and is high

for boys and pupils in Year 3. Pupils enjoy contributing to the school and wider community. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and empathy for others. Pupils showed parents the wide range of skills and understanding they have developed in their 'monsters' work with an engaging and entertaining assembly. The assembly showed the strongly developing speaking and listening skills as well as the growing confidence of pupils and the broader creativity in the curriculum.

The effectiveness of provision

The teaching in the school is now generally very focused and teachers' increased analytical approach and accurate assessments help to ensure teaching plans are effective in directing learning and making much more productive use of teaching assistants. Teachers work very hard to ensure pupils get useful and timely feedback that helps them develop more independent learning strategies. Teaching assistants contribute to assessment and are able to support pupils in groups and one to one as they have well-defined roles and responsibilities within the classroom. The headteacher and senior leaders have been highly effective in their support and development of the quality of teaching. They have modelled and supported teaching for colleagues and have generated a positive team ethos across a school that is determined and focused on the success of all pupils. The accurate and increasingly precise assessment of learning is allowing higher level use of tracking data to inform school leaders and teachers of how well pupils are making progress. Assessment of other subjects and personal development are being considered appropriately in order to build a fuller picture of pupils' achievement. As a result of the direct support by senior staff, the progress pupils make now is much more consistent and has ensured that previous underachievement is rapidly being eradicated.

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 – outstanding.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher has an excellent understanding of the school and the key priorities. She is an exceptional leader that tackles the issues effectively and supports staff to make the changes needed. She has established her high credibility through working alongside staff modelling outstanding teaching and assessment practice, as well as developing leadership skills and analytical approaches. This means that all staff are building the essential skills to move the school forward now and sustain this for the future. Leaders are aware of the progress they have made but are also clear about the key factors that still require further development in order to firmly establish the developments as sustainable practice. The interim executive board has been effective in monitoring the key recommendations from the last inspection report as well as moving towards a federated structure. The members are looking deeper into the wider school issues in order to develop a more systematic approach to school development.

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 has been supported effectively by the local authority with appropriate challenge and the availability of a range of professionals. The school now directs this support for itself and the local authority has responded to the needs of the school as they arise and are requested by school leaders.