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Mrs A Hilton-Childs
Headteacher
Meath Green Junior School
Greenfields Road
Horley
Surrey
RH6 8HW

Dear Mrs Hilton-Childs

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Meath Green Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 24 and 25 May 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures is good.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection is good.

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 Surrey.

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
 - putting in place, by April 2010, an effective and consistent system for assessing pupils' progress
 - ensuring teaching improves by summer 2010 so that all is at least satisfactory, and much good, and that pupils' learning is appropriately challenging and based on good assessment information
 - monitoring the quality of teaching more rigorously so good practice can be identified and weaknesses eliminated by summer 2010.

- Improve leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring there is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school by senior leaders and governors so that ambition to improve pupils' attainment is evident in higher pupils' achievement by summer 2010
 - urgently developing a school improvement plan, based on rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, to tackle the weaknesses in pupils' outcomes which are evident from poor performance through Key Stage 2.

Special measures: monitoring of Meath Green Junior School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 May 2011

Evidence

HMI and the additional inspector observed the school's work through observing lessons and scrutiny of documents and pupils' work, and met with the headteacher, senior and middle managers, teachers, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), teaching assistants, groups of pupils, three parents, two parent governors, and one representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous visit, the local authority has continued its support for the school through the School Improvement Partner. The school has continued its good links with a nearby junior school, a primary school in north London and a school in central London that was featured in the Ofsted Assessing Pupils Survey. These links are contributing to building capacity in leadership and management and sharing of good teaching and assessment practices.

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

The school has made improvements in relation to most of its priority areas arising from the previous monitoring visit. Using accurate data gathered on individual pupils in Years 3 to 6 and reassessing Year 3 pupils on entry, the school is now effectively addressing gaps in their literacy and numeracy skills profile through greater accuracy in tracking of pupils' progress and achievement.

Overall for the period June 2010 to May 2011, according to the school's data, rates of sub-levels of progress have improved for the majority of pupils in writing and mathematics compared to the previous year. However, All pupils appear to be making slower progress in their reading skills this year from spring 2010 to spring 2011, than for the period autumn 2009 to autumn 2010.. Most groups of pupils, who were significantly underachieving across English and mathematics at the previous monitoring visit, now appear to be making satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, there remains some unevenness across groups of pupils. School data indicate that boys in Year 5 make slower progress than expected in developing mathematical skills, whereas girls and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have made slower progress in their writing skills this year than in the previous year. However, according to school data, the school is on line to meet its target of 75% of Year 6 pupils making expected sub-levels of progress, and continues to address the unevenness across year groups and between subjects through more effective monitoring of those who are underachieving. Using the reassessments of Year 3 pupils' attainment upon entry to school, senior managers are tracking those who are underachieving and putting structured interventions in place. These have resulted in the majority of Year 3 pupils making the expected one sub-level of progress and a



number making two sub-levels of progress, especially in reading and writing. At the time of the previous monitoring visit, Year 4 pupils made slower progress in mathematics than in reading or writing. However, on this visit, school tracking data revealed that the same pupils are now making less progress in reading and writing than in mathematics. This is especially the case in relation to Year 4 girls and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The progress levels for Year 6 pupils reflect outcomes in their Key Stage 2 mock assessments, indicating high levels of attainment in mathematics, but lower levels in reading and writing. Results in mathematics indicate significantly higher outcomes than in the previous year with 88% of pupils attaining Level 4+ and 46% at Level 5. This exceeds the school's target. Results in reading are slightly under the school target, but in writing, significantly under by eight percentage points. The school has focused on boys' writing skills this term, having recognised that this group of pupils required specific interventions. This has been effective and the school now recognises that it needs to broaden these strategies to include other groups of pupils, including lower ability girls.

In almost half of the lessons observed, most pupils made good progress and in the rest of the lessons, pupils made satisfactory progress, while a very small minority did not make progress in line with their potential. This unevenness was reflected across all year groups. In all cases where pupils made good progress, teachers were setting learning objectives with differentiated success criteria based on their pupils' prior attainment and learning activities reflected these. However, in cases where progress was satisfactory or inadequate, inspectors observed weak planning that did not take full account of the pace of teaching and teaching input in relation to the full ability range of pupils. Teaching assistants are now identifying success criteria in line with their pupils' abilities, and most were observed encouraging pupils to develop independent learning strategies.

A good range of assessment activities increasingly inform teachers of the progress that individual pupils make. Peer- and self-assessment activities are used well in lessons. Pupils value greatly independent opportunities for choosing success criteria in relation to the learning objective when working on task and activities. They commented to inspectors that these helped them to aspire to higher levels, to know when they were working on target and when they could 'work my brain' on specific skills. The school has now strengthened links between the targets, ways of judging success and the learning objectives.

Handwriting skills and presentation of work for the majority of pupils are now good in English and mathematics, but satisfactory in science. Pupils entering the school in Year 3 have identifiable gaps in their mathematical skills and the school is working hard to address these through learning programmes such as SNAP and RM maths. These are motivational and engage pupils in their learning well. However, pupils attending before-school sessions who use the software do not consequently benefit from an evaluation of their learning with a teacher or teaching assistant.



Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
 - putting in place, by April 2010, an effective and consistent system for assessing pupils' progress – good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils continue to display respectful and good behaviours. They have good awareness of their roles as 'buddies' and peer mentoring is seen as highly beneficial across all age groups and, in particular, for newly arrived Year 3 pupils. Pupils expressed great pride in the displays of their written work exhibited around the school. Pupils, in particular those in Year 6, expressed their appreciation of the "positive changes" taking place this term and reported that these had helped them to make greater progress.

The effectiveness of provision

Almost half of the teaching observed was good and the rest mostly satisfactory. There is inconsistency both across and within year groups. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils of all abilities were observed gaining confidence in their budgeting skills in a retail context, using simple number calculations. However, despite the consistent use of learning objectives and differentiated success criteria in all lessons, some of the learning is still too rooted in mechanistic tasks and pupils are given few opportunities to transfer these to meaningful contexts. In writing activities, pupils are now developing independent referencing and dictionary skills for ensuring accurate spellings and punctuation. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to enliven lessons, and pupils have good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills.

Teachers and teaching assistants have access to good assessment information on their pupils and are increasingly using this to plan lessons. The quality of verbal feedback pupils receive in class continues to improve but is still inconsistent. However, there are some examples of excellent practice where teachers pay close attention to checking whether all pupils have fully understood a teaching objective before moving on to the next activity. Not all teachers fully evaluate the responses of those who indicate that they have not fully understood, or adapt activities in the light of this. Teachers continue to provide pupils with much valued constructive comments on written work and pupils value the opportunity to respond to the feedback. Marking of pupils' work is good in English and mathematics and most teachers provide pupils with comments that help pupils to know how to improve; however in science, marking is cursory and not as detailed.

The 'word banks' and 'words of common frequency', on display in classrooms, are now frequently used by pupils as an effective spelling resource. Cross-curricular links



to develop literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful contexts are more in evidence across most lessons and contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Ensure teaching improves by summer 2010 so that all is satisfactory, and much good, and that pupils' learning is appropriately challenging and based on good assessment information – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Following the previous monitoring visit, senior leaders have made good progress in the priority areas relating to teaching and assessment practice and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. This has been helped by more accurate information on pupils' performance and better monitoring of their progress by middle managers and teachers, together with planned interventions for those pupils who are underachieving against their potential. Middle managers have made a good start in effectively monitoring teaching and learning this term, including the scrutiny of pupils' work. However, the school's revised lesson observation process and format does not contain a sufficiently rigorous focus on the learning and progress of individual pupils, in particular in relation to their learning objectives and success criteria. Senior leaders have yet to evaluate pupils' performance data with sufficient clarity, so that key messages from these, together with those arising from lesson observations, can be shared at whole-school level. These performance trends are not yet securely cross-referenced with the newly formed school improvement plan.

There are good examples of monitoring of the impact of whole-school initiatives on pupils' learning and progress within this plan. In particular, the assistant headteacher has carried out a detailed and critical evaluation of the 'assessing pupil progress' scheme with learning objectives linked to differentiated success criteria, fully implemented across the school and the boys' writing project. These clearly provide excellent evidence of impact. The school has not developed a self-evaluation process that is fully inclusive, including actions that help build the capacity and critical analysis skills of senior, middle leaders and governors. Parents and carers interviewed by inspectors reported high levels of satisfaction with the progress the school is making and appreciated the changes that had taken place in the last term.

The governing body has continued its proactive role in working with the school on the production of better quality pupil performance data. The school is working effectively with its infant feeder schools to gain information on their pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills profiles and this is contributing to structuring better transition arrangements for Year 3 pupils for September 2011.

Progress since the previous inspection on the areas for improvement:



- Monitor the quality of teaching more rigorously so good practice can be identified and weaknesses eliminated by summer 2010 – good
- Ensure there is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school by senior leaders and governors so that ambition to improve pupils' attainment is evident for the more able pupils by summer 2010 – satisfactory
- Urgently develop a school improvement plan, based on rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, to tackle the weaknesses in pupils' outcomes which are evident from poor performance through Key Stage 2 – satisfactory

External support

The local authority has provided good focused support this term in helping the school to build the capacity of its middle leaders. Ensuring more proactive ways of working with senior, middle leaders and governors will continue to be crucial in sustaining capacity to improve.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the headteacher takes a strategic and operational lead on developing a self-evaluation process that develops whole-school capacity to improve and the critical analysis skills of all staff and governors.
- Ensure that the headteacher leads on identifying key messages and performance trends arising from pupil performance data and lesson observations, sharing these at whole-school level through measurable actions in the school improvement plan, so as to tackle unevenness of achievement across subjects and year groups.
- Ensure that teachers and teaching assistants continue setting appropriate learning objectives and success criteria leading to accelerated pupils' progress, in particular for those pupils with underdeveloped literacy and numeracy skills.
- Ensure that senior and middle managers, through lesson observations on teaching, learning and assessment, focus on the progress of individual pupils in relation to learning objectives and success criteria.
- Ensure the local authority supports senior managers in developing further strategic and operational capacity.