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30 June 2011

Mrs Nicky Willis
Headteacher
Cippenham Primary School
Elmshott Lane
Cippenham
Slough
Berkshire
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Dear Mrs Willis

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Cippenham Primary School

Following my visit with Warren Wilkinson, additional inspector, to your school on 28 and 29 June 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 April 2010. 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 – good.

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 Slough.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2010

- Rapidly increase the rate of progress in English and mathematics for pupils from all groups by:
 - ensuring that pupils build progressively on their learning as they move through the school
 - setting targets based on pupils' individual attainment levels, and ensuring that pupils make progress towards these targets in each year group.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least satisfactory across the school by ensuring that teachers:
 - use day-to-day assessment information to plan lessons that are sharply tailored to the needs of differing groups in their classes
 - use their time effectively in lessons to help differing groups of pupils move forwards in their learning
 - harness pupils' good personal development and ensure that they have challenging opportunities to be actively involved in learning and assessment.
- Improve systems for checking school effectiveness, planning for improvement and evaluating success by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders have a clear plan each term to show how they will secure improvement in pupils' attainment and progress across the school
 - analysing termly assessment information rigorously to determine how well all groups are making progress, so as to pinpoint where pupils fall behind
 - carrying out regular and rigorous checks to ensure that the resulting actions taken by the leadership team result in improved outcomes for pupils, particularly in English and mathematics
 - providing accurate information for the governing body so that it can carry out its duties more effectively
 - ensuring that longer-term plans for school improvement focus primarily on raising attainment and increasing pupils' rates of progress, particularly in English and mathematics.

Special measures: monitoring of Cippenham Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 28 and 29 June 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed 17 lessons or part sessions, two intervention groups and a session for gifted and talented pupils. They scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the two deputy headteachers, middle leaders, pupils, parents and carers, and the Chair of the Governing Body.

Context

The number on roll has risen from 559 to 566. Currently there are extensive building works being carried out to accommodate the extension of the school's Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 provision. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 did not start their schooling until halfway through the last academic year when Reception and Year 1 spaces were created for them at Cippenham.

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

Data from the most recent teacher assessments indicate that progress is continuing to gather momentum and improve steadily. Children in Reception make exceptional progress. Lesson observations and parental comments confirm that the children respond extremely well to the learning activities which are exciting and meaningful. For instance, by video-recording a proposed trip to Scotland via Heathrow to meet the new Year 1 teacher, the reception teachers had their classes spellbound, and so much progress was made during this session in relation to communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Consequently, most attain the expected levels of attainment for their age from levels on entry to school that are well below age-related expectations.

Given their delayed beginning into education and the high proportion of pupils who use English as an additional language, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well from a low starting point and are making good, steady progress. This is because pupils are given additional support to help them grasp basic skills. In addition, access to the outdoor area helps them to catch up with some of their lost learning time.

Progress is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 but accelerates in Years 5 and 6. Current attainment in Year 6 is above average but not significantly so. Nevertheless, their past underachievement is being steadily eradicated through good quality teaching and interesting activities which motivate the pupils' interest. Pupils' progress in mathematics has been particularly impressive in Year 6 where teachers have focused on problem-solving issues relating to everyday life experiences. Encouraging girls to

be more involved in their lessons and talk about their mathematical problems has been successful in closing the gap between their attainment and those of the boys. In the past pupils who were eligible for free school meals did not do as well as their peers but this has been carefully rectified through discrete support work. This specific group of pupils make good progress in small group sessions which are led by the learning support assistants who provide individual tuition and guidance. Pupils enjoy these lessons and remain well focused on their tasks. This was demonstrated well during a mathematics lesson when a group of Year 5 pupils made good progress in learning about the inverse process by eagerly rolling a large dice and calculating the addition and subtraction of the numbers. Pupils report that they 'feel more excited about going to school' because they are clear that their 'headteacher wants a better school for them'.

Progress in the areas for improvement since the last monitoring visit.

- Rapidly increase the rate of progress in English and mathematics for pupils from all groups – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils grow into mature and sensible young people because they are given greater opportunities to take responsibility in and around school. This was demonstrated well during a committee meeting of the student enterprise group who were planning the forthcoming 'Prom' for the Year 6 leavers. The meeting was sensibly run by the chairperson who invited the directors to report on their findings, share suggestions and offer views. The pupils demonstrated well how they could use their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills well to promote the event, organise the entertainment, and budget for the costs involved. There has been a significant improvement in the attitudes of the older pupils towards the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Many of the Key Stage 2 pupils are now involved in helping the younger ones in a range of different activities. This has resulted in a much more positive feel to the school with Key Stage 2 pupils understanding that they are now very much part of a primary school.

The effectiveness of provision

No inadequate teaching was observed during the monitoring visit and well over half of it was good or better. Lesson planning is consistent throughout the school and clarity of learning intentions ensures that all pupils understand the purpose of each session. The best lessons are characterised by an excellent rapport between pupils and adults, skilful questioning, meaningful content and extremely high expectations of work and behaviour. This was evident in a Year 4 mathematics lesson which was based on the pupils' involvement in the recent school fair to illustrate how Venn diagrams could be used to sort out information and show results. The session was highly successful because it was delivered in a lively, humorous manner which fully

engaged the pupils in their thinking. Consolidating learning through partner work is used well to promote confidence and independence. Pupils are clear about targets for improvement and appreciate the comments teachers write in their books. Marking in English books is good but the quality is less consistent in mathematics. Lessons are less effective when teachers talk for too long, subject knowledge is less secure and an inappropriate tone or phrase is used.

Teachers have developed a greater confidence in planning provision for age groups with which they have not previously had experience. The influence and guidance from an Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teacher is reflected well in the continuing improvement of provision for the younger pupils. Recording their findings in the outdoor bugs research laboratory, touching very realistic but pretend frogspawn and dressing up as a mini-beast are just some of the wonderful opportunities available for the youngest children. Themes such as 'The owl who was afraid of the dark' are used well in Year 1 to promote and engage pupils in their learning. Providing special carpets in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 where each child has a special leaf or butterfly to sit on during plenary sessions is a good example of how the school has embraced its new status as a primary school.

While the use of intervention groups is a highly successful feature of provision, the school has rightly reviewed the balance between this high quality input and classroom support, and plans for greater inclusivity are well under way.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least satisfactory across the school – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The strong cohesive leadership of the headteacher and the two deputies enables the school to continue to drive ahead with improvements. By smartly using their own individual strengths and areas of expertise they are maintaining a high profile of school improvement and increased effectiveness. This has been recognised by parents and carers who are impressed by the changes to the school. As one mum explained in an email to the inspectors, 'Since Mrs Willis joined the school, she has done a fantastic job, making improvements to the school.' Other parents describe the school as 'uplifting', with happier staff amidst a community that gets on well together. Most noticeable is the way that stakeholders are clear that this is a now a primary school, and the links forged with the adjoining infant and nursery schools have galvanised the local community. Middle leaders have embraced their roles well and can securely demonstrate the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes. For example, teachers have a good understanding of the progress each child makes in their class and this promotes a greater sense of accountability. Improved reading standards can also be attributed to a focused approach by middle leaders to using

guided reading sessions regularly to promote literacy skills. Governors are steadily developing a greater understanding of their role as they receive appropriate information to support their decision making and there is a growing awareness that they too are accountable for school improvement.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the areas for improvement.

- Improve systems for checking school effectiveness, planning for improvement and evaluating success – good.

External support

The school has made good use of a specialist school improvement adviser from the Department of Education. Working with the leadership team, this adviser has moderated lesson observations and supported the use of work sampling to evidence pupils' progress. After administering Key Stage 1 standardised assessment tests for the first time, the school has valued the moderation process which took place by the local authority. Good use is made of support from local schools, particularly Cippenham Infant School, which has advised them well in improving pupils' writing skills. The close links that have now been established with the adjoining infant school are having a good impact on transition arrangements between Years 2 and 3.