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17 November 2011

Mrs H Faulkner  
Court Lane Junior School  
Hilary Avenue  
Cosham  
Portsmouth  
Hampshire  
PO6 2PP

Dear Mrs Faulkner

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Court Lane Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the children, staff and governors who were so welcoming.

Since the school was last inspected a new headteacher has been appointed and has been in post since September 2011. The senior leadership team is now up to strength as the deputy headteacher has returned from maternity leave. The staff team is largely stable, with only one new teacher in post since the inspection. There are currently four teachers on maternity leave and their posts are being covered by teachers on temporary contracts.

As a result of the inspection on 12 and 13 May 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



My visits to a sample of lessons together with an analysis of the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress indicate that achievement, especially in mathematics, is improving. Standards reached by Year 6 pupils in 2011 were well above those found nationally in both English and mathematics. In mathematics the outcomes for pupils of all abilities improved and they all made better-than-expected progress. Pupils also made better-than-expected progress in English, although within this the most able and least able pupils did not make as much progress as the others. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and receive good help and support.

A positive learning environment exists throughout the school. Behaviour both in lessons and around the school continues to be good and pupils work and play well together. Pupils are keen to learn and do well and are enthusiastic in lessons, especially where the tasks are interesting and engaging. Pupils have very clear opinions about their education and are taking more responsibility for their own learning. For example, they appreciate the way their teachers now make the learning objectives of the lesson very clear. They understand how they and their teachers can use ways of judging success to achieve these objectives.

Teaching is now much more tightly focused on learning and teachers have higher expectations of both pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. This is illustrated by the improvements in teaching of mental mathematics starter sessions that proceed at a rapid pace and really challenge the pupils to think and answer quickly. As a result, pupils' skills in this area are improving. Improvements in teaching are well supported by the rigorous marking and assessment systems now in place. These also support improving of pupils' skills in spelling and punctuation. Pupils' outcomes are used effectively to maintain an overview of whole-school, class and individual performance. Pupils are encouraged to assess both their own work and that of others. Some pupils write comments on the standard of their work and how well they have achieved the learning intentions of the lesson, although this is not consistent. Too many comment on enjoyment of their work rather than their success in learning. Pupils know and understand their challenging targets and how well they are progressing towards meeting those targets.

Teachers are making much better use of the outcomes of assessment to adapt and plan future lessons as well as identifying pupils who need extra help. Regular reviews of pupils' performance are now well established. This process is having a significant impact on ensuring the needs of individual pupils are identified promptly and issues of underachievement addressed. Learning support assistants give pupils good pastoral help but their work is not sufficiently effective in supporting academic progress.

The headteacher, effective senior leadership team and governors are committed to improving the school to ensure all pupils achieve their best. The staff team is firmly behind this vision and this drives a better capacity for sustained improvement. School improvement planning is more tightly focused on improving achievement



through working towards challenging targets. The impact of planning is tracked closely through the school's robust monitoring and evaluation process. This is supported by collection and analysis of a wide range of information on pupils' performance. Middle leaders and managers are involved in monitoring and evaluation in a variety of ways, including direct observations of lessons. They clearly understand their responsibilities for the quality of education in their respective areas.

Governors are now much more skilled in interpreting and understanding information on pupils' performance. Through a combination of training and clearer presentation of performance information by the school, they are in a stronger position to ask appropriate questions that challenge the school to raise achievement. The work of the school has been well supported by the local authority through regular meetings to analyse target setting and standards as well as helping to plan school improvement actions.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones

**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## Annex

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, especially the proportion reaching higher levels, by:
  - improving pupils' mental skills in mathematics
  - improving pupils' spelling and punctuation
  - increasing intervention programmes to challenge and stretch potentially higher-attaining pupils and, where necessary, to help them catch up.
  
- Improve the consistency of good teaching and pupils' good learning and progress by:
  - making better use of assessment to ensure that work is consistently matched to all pupils' abilities when they are taught in mathematics sets
  - ensuring mental starter sessions are long enough to develop pupils' skills in mental arithmetic and their ability to explain their thinking.
  
- Ensure all those with leadership responsibilities, including governors, actively monitor the quality of provision and use the outcomes to bring about improvement in pupils' attainment by:
  - ensuring the school improvement plan clearly shows the proportions targeted to reach higher levels of attainment in different years and sets by the end of this term
  - increasing opportunities for middle leaders to observe teaching and evaluate how pupils are doing
  - strengthening governors' ability to evaluate data so they can ask the right questions to provide greater levels of challenge in matters of attainment.