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14 December 2011

Mr R Griffiths
The Headteacher
Mount Pleasant Junior School
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Hampshire
SO14 0WZ

Dear Mr Griffiths

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Mount Pleasant Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 December 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to pupils and the staff.

A small number of changes have occurred since the last inspection. The school has experienced a rise in the number of pupils entering the school from Eastern Europe, many of whom are at the early stage of learning English. From September 2012 the school will be expanding, with an additional class initiated in Year 3 for the next four years that has resulted in some building work and remodelling within the school.

As a result of the inspection on 27 and 28 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.

Since the last inspection attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has been on an improving trend. Although attainment remained below average overall in 2011, mathematics has risen to be in line with the national average and English is closing the gap quickly. Work seen in pupils' books, lessons and the school's own assessment data indicate that the rate of improvement is accelerating even further, especially for pupils in Year 6 and those at the early stages of learning English. This

improving picture is a result of new and robust procedures that have successfully focused on improving the quality of provision and raising pupils' achievement swiftly.

The use of assessment and monitoring information has improved significantly since the last inspection, leading to raised aspirations and expectations of pupils' capabilities. Analysis of the information enables early identification and intervention with pupils who have gaps in their learning. Intervention and support are robust. Teachers are increasingly using pupils' prior learning to set challenging, yet attainable, targets and tasks that are better matched to pupils' needs and abilities, especially the higher attaining. As a result, pupils of all ages are making accelerated and frequently rapid progress. In one successful mathematics lesson pupils' work from the previous day was used to highlight strengths and to sensitively redirect pupils who had missed the identification of equivalent fractions. Work was subsequently given to ensure any gaps in understanding were tackled and more able pupils were extended fully. Teaching makes consistent use of success criteria in lessons and in marking so pupils better understand what they are aiming to achieve, how well they are doing and how to improve further. Equally, pupils know their targets and how to achieve them. Observation and intervention by teachers or learning support assistants, at the correct time, are helping pupils to make swift progress in both mathematics and English. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how CTG (closing the gap) comments help them to reflect, check their own work and make progress towards their targets.

In the lessons observed teachers used questioning effectively to engage pupils and extend their knowledge and understanding of the subject. In one good English lesson questions checked that pupils were able to identify key vocabulary and techniques that make a story interesting before starting to write their own. The pace of lessons and learning is improving and time is mainly used effectively to consolidate learning before moving to the next task. However, this is yet to be embedded firmly in all classes.

Attendance has steadily improved over the last couple of years. In the last three months the highest ever levels of attendance have been obtained and are now above the national average. This is because robust new sanctions and rewards have been introduced to encourage better attendance. Senior leaders have increasingly found ways to engage with parents and carers since the last inspection. The work of home link staff is effective in helping parents and carers to understand more clearly the impact non attendance can have on achievement. Parents and carers have more opportunities to become involved in their child's education and workshops have been introduced on how adults can support learning at home.

The monitoring of teaching and learning has improved. Senior leaders have introduced clear criteria that are shared with all staff so everyone has a common understanding of what constitutes good and outstanding teaching and learning. Staff have ample opportunities for professional development and, increasingly, to observe and share effective practice. This is leading to more consistently good teaching across the school. The roles and responsibilities of year leaders and other middle

managers have been strengthened. These staff are more involved in monitoring, evaluating and driving improvements in their areas of responsibility. Senior and middle managers observe lessons together, which is helping to bring about the greater consistency in teaching and learning between age groups and subjects. More emphasis has been placed on monitoring pupils' learning and progress, both in lessons and over time, and teachers are robustly held to account for the progress of pupils in their class.

Senior leaders have taken decisive actions since the last inspection that are improving the quality of the school's work rapidly. They have created a cohesive team and positive learning environment, leading to the improving quality of teaching and learning. New robust systems are ensuring everyone at the school is moving forward together at pace. Initiatives are leading to the improving trend in pupils' attainment and an increased rate of progress, indicating a better capacity for sustained improvement. Teachers are enthused by the new drive for improvement and those spoken to said that 'everyone is on board with the changes because we can see the difference it is making'. All staff acknowledge that some inconsistencies remain in how fully initiatives are embedded between age groups and classes.

The local authority provides effective support. Teachers at the school have had a range of opportunities to work with advanced skills teachers for literacy and numeracy as part of an intensive support programme. They have also worked alongside a lead learner in the use and moderation of assessment to support learning. Senior leaders have been supported well with self-evaluation activities and making secure, moderated judgements.

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

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment further by providing greater challenge in lessons through:
 - increasing the pace of lessons so that pupils are consistently challenged in their learning
 - better match of work and more effective questioning, particularly for higher-attaining pupils
 - embedding good practice so that inconsistencies are eliminated.
- Improve monitoring of teaching and learning through clearer criteria for evaluating its quality so that improvement can be monitored more closely. Involve senior leaders in the process.
- Engage parents more fully in their children's learning and canvas their support to promote good attendance.