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Mrs A Wilson
The Headteacher
Talavera Infant School
Gun Hill
Aldershot
GU11 1RG

Dear Mrs Wilson

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Talavera Infant School

Following my visit with Warren Wilkinson, Additional Inspector, to your school on 26 and 27 January 2012, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 2011. 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 – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not 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 Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2011

- Raise pupils' attainment so that a greater proportion of pupils reach or exceed the nationally expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - providing a curriculum that effectively meets the needs of all pupils and develops their skills in literacy and mathematics across all subjects
 - extending and enriching the curriculum with a range of activities that will broaden pupils' experiences
 - improving the quality of teaching as soon as possible, so that 80% is good or better, ensuring that pace and challenge are improved, and providing targets for pupils that they will understand.
- Increase the effectiveness of the school's leaders and governors in driving school improvement by:
 - setting challenging targets in respect of pupils' attainment at the end of the school year and key stage, in order to raise expectations of pupils' progress
 - ensuring that procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's work are implemented with rigour and are effective in underpinning the school's self-evaluation.
- Raise attendance to 95% and improve punctuality by:
 - developing and implementing a range of effective strategies to promote pupils' regular attendance and punctuality
 - introducing robust systems to monitor and analyse pupils' attendance and lateness to school so that appropriate and supportive action can be taken.

Special measures: monitoring of Talavera Infant School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 26 and 27 January 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed 13 lessons or part lessons. They scrutinised school documents, data on pupils' progress, and pupils' work and heard pupils read. They met with the headteacher, senior managers, staff, three members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives from the local authority. Informal discussions were also held with pupils.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been a significant number of changes. Previous staff restructuring has consolidated the senior team and phase leaders' roles. The membership of the governing body has changed. One teacher left the school at the end of the summer term. One class is being taught by a long-term internal supply teacher, one teacher is on long-term absence. A newly qualified teacher was appointed in September 2011 and another teacher is due to take maternity leave. As the school roll has fallen recently, so has the number of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has risen however, as has the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Data from the most recent national assessments in 2011 indicated that standards at the end of Year 2 remained low. Nonetheless, the results showed signs of improvement in writing and mathematics but not in reading. Across the school, pupils have low levels of reading ability which presents a significant barrier to their learning. Early indications from inspection evidence and the school's data indicate that attainment remains low, especially in reading.

Despite robust efforts by the headteacher and senior staff, the rates of pupils' progress are variable and uneven within year groups and across subjects. This is closely related to the quality of teaching. Measuring pupils' progress in Year 1 has been hindered by previous unreliable information about progress from their starting points. Some long-term staff absence, especially in Year 2, and instances of pupil non-attendance, have also impeded actual progress. The focus on developing pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics), establishing formal guided reading sessions and improved resources all contribute positively to pupils' slowly improving achievement. Changes to the curriculum mean that pupils have more opportunities to practise their literacy skills across subjects, as well as increasing

their enjoyment for learning through a range of activities to broaden their experiences. Consequently, pupils are becoming more confident in their reading and writing. Pupils enjoyed role play through the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' in Reception, dressing in role as 'Pirates' in Year 1 and as characters from fairy stories in Year 2.

In mathematics, the teaching of basic skills in more practical ways has meant that pupils are making up for gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. To support accelerated progress the deputy headteacher teaches mathematics and this is leading to some noticeable improvements in teaching quality. Several told inspectors that mathematics was now their favourite subject! Pupils who may have disabilities and/or special educational needs are beginning to benefit from better and more focused support. Earlier identification of any underperformance results in pupils receiving targeted help early on in English and mathematics. Minority ethnic pupils and those learning English as an additional language continue to outperform their peers in school and nationally.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics – satisfactory.

The quality of teaching

The school's monitoring confirms that the quality of teaching is improving. Instances of inadequate teaching have been reduced and there are signs of higher-quality teaching and learning through the school. Teachers are developing in confidence and welcome the guidance and support from senior leaders. Teachers' expectations are rising, informed by more regular assessment of pupils' performance and by making teachers more accountable for their own practice in the classroom. Typical strengths in teaching are the quality of relationships between pupils and adults, and improved lesson planning. These, alongside the use of clear learning objectives, teachers' questioning and improved resources engage and interest pupils. Weaker teaching does not make enough use of teaching assistants in promoting pupils' independence, planning a close enough match of work to the different abilities or providing marking that pinpoints next learning steps. The school has more accurate data to show improving progress, but the proportion of pupils making good progress is not high enough to overcome past underperformance to raise attainment quickly. Pupils know their group targets, and work in lessons, pupils' books and school-based data all point to a narrowing of the attainment gap in pupils' learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils continue to have good attitudes to learning and talk positively about the school. The improvements in the curriculum have a positive effect on pupils' behaviour. Pupils are polite and listen to each other and, when working in small groups, discuss their ideas. They also enjoy working independently. In the

playground, they play together and mix well. However, a few said that there was fighting but it was usually dealt with quickly. They said they felt safe and could talk to an adult with any worries.

Pupils' punctuality is improving as a result of more rigorous monitoring and better communications with parents and carers. Better systems are in place to promote more regular attendance, but have not had sufficient impact; attendance figures at 94.86% are similar to those at the same period last year. The school uses awards and incentives to encourage good attendance and is in regular communication with parents and carers and the education welfare services to raise the importance of regular attendance.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise attendance to 95% and improve punctuality – satisfactory.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher provides a clear direction for school improvement that is shared with senior leaders and members of the governing body. The headteacher and the local authority have set challenging targets in respect of pupils' attainment.

Weaker teaching is being tackled more robustly through regular monitoring of teaching and support where needed. Teachers benefit from training, guidance and support and plan together. Staff restructuring has enabled a distribution of responsibilities with good role models for staff, although middle managers are still developing in their roles. Self-evaluation is increasingly accurate and is measured against pupil achievement, giving the school a greater capacity to improve. Evidence shows an improving picture in the quality of education provided and links with parents and carers have improved. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are identified accurately.

Membership of the governing body has changed significantly, with five additional governors appointed by the local authority. While some members are building on their expertise, other more experienced members influence the strategic development of the school more directly. Restructuring of committees and an impressive governing body action plan, together with regular meetings focused on strategic developments, ensure the governors not only support but also hold the school to account. They are clear about what needs to be done to ensure that the school moves forward and to ensure equality of opportunity by reducing the gaps in pupil performance. Good procedures are in place to ensure that pupils feel safe at school.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- increase the effectiveness of the school's leaders and governors in driving school improvement – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority statement of action was deemed to meet requirements. The school has benefited from effective ongoing local authority support through regular visits by the primary phase inspector and formal meetings at a senior level. The local authority has provided advanced skills teachers to role model best practice and is helping the school to explore links with other schools to look at extending best practice.