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Mrs J Steele
Headteacher
Horsell C of E Aided Junior School
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Dear Mrs Steele

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Horsell C of E Aided Junior School

Following my visit with Olson Davies, additional inspector, to your school on 6 and 7 March 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 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 – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – 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 Surrey.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2012

- Accelerate pupils' progress in order to raise their attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are always given work that challenges and extends them
 - analysing the reasons why girls underachieve in mathematics and implementing consistent teaching strategies that build their confidence and understanding
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length independently in order to improve the fluency of their writing.

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good in all year groups by:
 - ensuring all teachers take responsibility for assessing pupils' progress regularly throughout the year and making sure they are on track to meet challenging targets in relation to their initial starting points
 - checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments so that there is whole-school agreement about levels of attainment and what constitutes good and satisfactory progress
 - eliminating inconsistencies between classes and year groups so that all groups of pupils are given work that challenges and extends their thinking.

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance in driving improvement by:
 - evaluating all aspects of the school's work with greater rigour
 - giving senior and middle leaders more autonomy and accountability for driving improvement and monitoring pupils' progress
 - involving teachers in checking their pupils' progress from term to term and taking swift action to tackle early signs of underachievement
 - ensuring that the school improvement plan includes precise actions, timescales and measurable targets for improvement so that staff and governors can evaluate the impact of actions taken.

Special measures: monitoring of Horsell C of E Aided Junior School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 March 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and senior leaders, subject leaders, groups of pupils, eight representatives from the governing body and an Improvement Partner employed by the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit the roles of the senior leadership team have been clarified and a new role of curriculum leader has been created. Two new governors have been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school is closing the gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils through effective intervention targeted at those pupils who have fallen behind or are at risk of underachieving. Heads of year, subject leaders and senior leaders are meeting regularly and using assessment data well to analyse the reasons why groups or individuals are underachieving. Data provided by the school shows that progress is improving in English, where daily guided reading sessions are improving literacy skills and well-planned tasks in lessons and for homework focus on consolidating knowledge and understanding. More pupils are developing an enthusiasm for reading and writing. Strategies are being developed to tackle the remaining areas of weakness, particularly spelling, although they are not yet being implemented consistently across year groups or supported by formative marking.

Progress is slower in mathematics. School data shows that more pupils in maths are making accelerated progress to narrow the gap between their performance and similar groups of pupils nationally, but a legacy of underachievement remains. Some pupils in the upper year groups, particularly Year 5, are unable to provide accurate answers or justify the methods they are using in lessons because they lack competence in basic number skills. The curriculum is being adapted to provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils in English and mathematics, with a focus on encouraging more independent learning in lessons and through targeted teaching groups. For example, a small group of Year 6 pupils aiming to achieve Level 6 in mathematics responded enthusiastically to stimulating and challenging tasks and activities to extend their problem-solving skills and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts and vocabulary.

Procedures to monitor the individual progress of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are thorough. Additional adults provide good quality support in class and intervention is targeted to allow these pupils to achieve in line with similar pupils nationally. Although some good practice was observed in lessons in Years 3 and 4, strategies to support the learning of pupils with English as an additional language are not yet being implemented consistently across the school.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in order to raise their attainment in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

The quality of teaching

An equal proportion of good and satisfactory teaching in mathematics and English was observed during the inspection. Targeted professional development and the sharing of good practice have equipped teachers with a range of strategies and techniques to improve their teaching. The quality of learning is improving because most lessons are well planned, learning outcomes are clearly identified and pupils know what they need to do to be successful in their learning. Where teaching is consistently good it helps to accelerate the progress of pupils who have fallen behind in previous years. Teaching is most effective when activities are matched carefully to the different needs of pupils and the key learning points are consolidated frequently during the lesson. The best learning takes place when activities are amended and the pace is adjusted when pupils find the work too hard or too easy. Teachers generally provide helpful verbal feedback during lessons and inform pupils about the progress they are making, but the quality of written feedback varies considerably. There is an inconsistent approach to identifying basic weaknesses in spelling, literacy and numeracy across subjects and in providing opportunities for pupils to identify and correct errors. There are good quality displays of pupils' work, key vocabulary, definitions and visual prompts for learning, including word walls. Visualisers are being used well to display pupils' work and identify learning points, although there are some missed opportunities to reinforce the basic rules of spelling and grammar.

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

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good in all year groups– satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils report unanimously that they feel safe in school and that they get on well together. Pupils are polite and friendly and conduct themselves well around the

school. Their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to learning in lessons where expectations are high and they are challenged to achieve their best work. The pace of learning slows in lessons where pupils lose interest and are allowed to seek out opportunities to waste time. The different forms that bullying can take are understood by pupils and they express confidence in the prompt manner in which the school deals with the rare instances that occur. Attendance is above average and persistent absence is low.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leadership and management have been strengthened and consolidated at all levels since the last visit. Self-evaluation is securely established. Actions planned to eliminate the variability in achievement and improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning are based on the outcomes of rigorous monitoring. The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders have been clarified to allow them to have a better understanding of whole-school priorities and to make them more accountable for driving improvement. The role of the inclusion leader is understood by staff and is developing well, although the school's work on inclusion is not yet evaluated with the same rigour. The newly established role of curriculum leader has the potential to improve the planned curriculum and raise achievement but it is at the early stages of development. The headteacher has greater autonomy for driving improvement. The induction of new teachers and middle leaders has been managed well and there is a strong sense of purpose and team work amongst staff. Morale is good.

Governors continue to improve their knowledge and understanding of the work of the school through the committee system and visits to appraise the school's work. Their involvement in strategic planning has been strengthened through more formal links with school leaders and managers. They are receiving more accurate information as a result of more precise monitoring but there is scope to increase their rigour in evaluating the school's effectiveness.

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

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance in driving improvement – good.

External support

The local authority's support is decreasing. English and mathematics consultants continue to work with the school and are providing good support. The Improvement Partner provides positive support in developing leadership and management.