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Mrs Sandra Lawlor
Headteacher
Padnell Junior School
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Waterlooville
Hampshire
PO8 8EA

Dear Mrs Lawlor

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Padnell Junior School

Following my visit with Victor Chaffey, additional inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 July 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 February 2012. 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

Christine Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise pupils' achievement, especially in writing and mathematics, so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is at least average and pupils make at least the expected progress by:
 - making consistent use of assessment data so that the level of challenge is better matched to the needs of all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that writing tasks engage all pupils, especially boys
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' handwriting and presentation
 - giving pupils clear and precise feedback on what they need to do to improve the quality of their writing
 - setting high expectations for the quality of writing in all subjects.

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make the levels of progress of which they are capable in all areas by:
 - providing teachers with clear guidance about strengths and areas for development in their teaching
 - ensuring teachers check on pupils' progress during lessons and make any necessary adjustments to meet their needs
 - using targeted questions effectively to check pupils' understanding, extend their thinking and provide greater challenge
 - making sure that the pace of lessons is brisk and that pupils are fully engaged at all times
 - sharing good practice and setting clear expectations for all staff.

- Improve the work of all leaders and managers, including the governing body, so that they all play an effective role in driving the school's improvement by:
 - rigorously monitoring the impact of actions which seek to bring about improvements
 - monitoring the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress, especially on boys' writing
 - ensuring that the governing body is more rigorous in holding the school to account.

Special measures: monitoring of Padnell Junior School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 July 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

There have been no significant staffing changes since the last inspection and the senior leadership team remains the same with the deputy headteacher post filled on an acting basis. The membership of the governing body has changed with six new governors being appointed. There are three remaining vacancies. Both the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair are new to their roles. The number of pupils on roll has decreased slightly.

Achievement of pupils at the school

There are emerging indications that the progress pupils are making is improving through a strong focus on raising the quality of teaching and learning. Analysis of the recent provisional test outcomes, teacher assessments and scrutiny of pupils' work for current Year 6 pupils indicates that standards are improving as more pupils are making the progress they should.

Standards in writing are improving as teachers have higher expectations of their pupils' performance and the tasks are more interesting and engaging, especially for boys. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils' reading skills are improving as the guided reading tasks are better integrated into other subject areas. Pupils get more opportunities to practise their reading using resources that are more closely matched to their abilities. Similarly in mathematics, standards are improving and pupils are making better progress with almost a third of the current Year 6 pupils reaching the higher Level 5.

Information on pupils' performance and inspection evidence indicate that overall standards reached by current Year 5 pupils are also improving. Improvements in writing skills in this year group are slower compared to other subject areas as these pupils have more ground to make up from lower initial starting points. For Year 4 pupils, achievement in literacy and numeracy is improving at a slower rate in comparison to other year groups as teaching is less successful in meeting the needs of the pupils. There is a strong focus in Year 3 on consolidating their initial literacy and numeracy skills on entry to the school and then building on those to ensure progression in their learning.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs continue to make mostly appropriate progress due to the good support they receive, with some making good progress. Since the inspection the school has worked hard to improve literacy and numeracy skills but there has been less emphasis on developing those skills in other subject areas.

As a result of more rigorous assessment procedures teachers are now much better informed about pupils' performance and know how to improve it. Progress in lessons is good where expectations of both the quantity and quality of pupils' work are high and work is appropriately targeted at pupils' needs.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement.

- Raise pupils' achievement, especially in writing and mathematics, so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is at least average and pupils make at least the expected progress – satisfactory

The quality of teaching

Teaching overall is improving although the quality is still variable in some classes. The improved monitoring of teaching and learning now clearly identifies positive qualities and areas for improvement overall and for individual teachers. Following this monitoring, support and coaching have been put in place to help teachers improve. Planning is now more consistent with learning objectives and teachers have much sharper expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour. There is a clearer focus on what pupils are expected to learn although sometimes expectations are not always precise enough to support the learning process. Where lesson planning and classroom management are strong pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners. They focus on their teacher and engage readily in the range of activities planned to help them learn. Teachers generally manage pupils and their behaviour appropriately. Where lessons proceed at a fast pace, opportunities for disruption are reduced and little time is lost in dealing with pupils' behaviour. For example, no time was wasted in lessons where mini-whiteboards were used to gain quick responses from the class. In other lessons pupils sometimes drifted off task where too much time was spent on a particular activity, for example sitting on the carpet for too long in a whole-class session.

Assessment has improved significantly as teachers use a wider variety of strategies to judge the progress their pupils are making. Teachers are starting to make better use of targeted questions in lessons to check pupils' understanding. Books are well marked, especially in literacy, with good written feedback that encourages pupils to respond and engage in a dialogue with their teacher. Assessment outcomes are collated and pupils' progress tracked over time in order to ensure progression in their learning. In this way underachievement can be identified and addressed

promptly. As a result of these improvements in assessment teachers are now setting targets for pupils that support their progress.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make the levels of progress of which they are capable in all areas – satisfactory

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are confident and happy both around the school and in lessons. They get on well with each other and with their teachers. Pupils are certain that they feel very safe in school and that any issues they might have are dealt with quickly. Vulnerable pupils are well supported by the school and staff have a good knowledge of them as individuals and their needs. Incidents of bullying are unusual and pupils say it is not a problem in the school. Pupils are confident that where bullying does occur it is dealt with promptly by staff. Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying may take and understand how this may affect them. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and what might constitute an unsafe situation.

Behaviour in lessons is improving and pupils are now much more aware of the links between good behaviour and good learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school regularly and on time and they are very positive about the improvements made in the school since the inspection. Where teaching is weaker and behaviour management not as secure, pupils sometimes drift off task where the pace of lessons does not keep them engaged with their learning.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The pace of school improvement has increased since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. This is based on better planning and a more rigorous approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This provides the senior leadership team with a largely accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in the school's work. The senior team has been successful in gaining the commitment of its staff to the improvements through engaging them in the planning process. One outcome is the production of a list of 'non-negotiables of learning and teaching and planning' agreed by all staff. This forms the basis of their everyday classroom work and observations of teaching are matched against these criteria. In addition more rigorous assessment of standards reached by the pupils is giving teachers secure data on performance that they are using to improve outcomes and plan future lessons. Teachers are now more accountable for the quality of education in their classes and for the outcomes achieved by their pupils.

The governors recognise that they need to take a more active role in school development, especially in terms of challenging senior leaders and finding out for themselves what is happening in school. Their understanding of the use of information on pupils' performance to determine achievement is improving. The school has not yet got a full complement of governors and several are new and inexperienced. The local authority is organising training and governors' understanding of their role is improving.

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

- Improve the work of all leaders and managers, including the governing body, so that they all play an effective role in driving the school's improvement – satisfactory

External support

The local authority provides good, well-targeted support for the school to complement the work of the leadership team. The local authority statement of action was evaluated and fulfilled all requirements. There is now a clear understanding of the issues faced by the school and the statement sets out a clear agenda for addressing the weaknesses identified in the last inspection.

There is an appropriate emphasis on enabling the school to develop leadership capacity among the staff. This work is at a relatively early stage in terms of extending the roles of middle managers, but the signs are encouraging as staff are now more aware of their accountability for pupils' achievement and improving the quality of education that the school provides. The local authority has arranged for more support targeted at developing leadership further.

In addition, the school has benefited from the work of the consultants supporting in specific areas, for example literacy and numeracy. Intensive coaching work with some teachers is improving teaching and learning.