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13 July 2012

Mr Anthony White
The Headteacher
Godalming Junior School
Hallam Road
Godalming
GU7 3HW

Dear Mr White

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Godalming Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 11 and 12 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

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

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and achievement particularly in English so that by the end of Year 6 in 2012 at least 85% of pupils make at least two levels of progress from Key Stage 1 by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length when learning in different subjects
 - reducing the number of photocopied resources and worksheets used in lessons
 - improving the teaching of the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that by July 2012 it is at least satisfactory and at least 60% of lessons are good by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information to plan lessons and to provide activities that are well matched to the learning needs of all pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve by setting challenging targets in English and mathematics to reduce the gap between the attainment of boys and girls
 - providing activities that engage pupils more and enable them to take a more active role in their learning
 - ensuring teachers provide guidance to pupils about what they have done well and how they can improve the quality of their work, especially their writing
 - providing opportunities for pupils to respond to comments made in marking.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - introducing robust systems for self-evaluation
 - using the information from self-evaluation to establish a long-term strategic plan with appropriate short-term plans with sharply defined aims and priorities focused on school improvement
 - developing systems to ensure that leaders at all levels, including the governing body and middle leaders, monitor, challenge and develop the work of the school.

Special measures: monitoring of Godalming Junior School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 11 and 12 July 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. Nine lessons were observed, including five that were seen jointly with the assistant headteacher. One assembly and break and lunch time were observed.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, one teacher has left the school and another teacher is on maternity leave. One other teacher has returned from maternity leave and the deputy headteacher is on long-term sick leave. An assistant headteacher has been appointed and leads on developing teaching and learning.

Achievement of pupils at the school

There has been acceleration in pupils' progress which has resulted in significantly more pupils making at least expected progress over time in relation to their starting points and abilities. Improvements to teaching have resulted in lessons which engage pupils and challenge them to improve. Although some weaknesses still persist in writing and spelling, pupils have good opportunities to write at length in a variety of contexts and there is clear evidence of improvements in writing. A small minority of pupils have reading ages that are significantly below their chronological age and this sometimes impedes their learning. However, actions taken by the school ensure that these gaps are closing. Unvalidated results from tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show a significant improvement compared to results from the previous year.

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

- raise attainment and achievement particularly in English so that by the end of Year 6 in 2012 at least 85% of pupils make at least two levels of progress from Key Stage 1 – good.

The quality of teaching

Senior leaders have undertaken a series of lesson observations that have highlighted strengths and areas for development in teaching. The school's own data show a significant improvement in the quality of teaching over time. Inspection evidence confirms the school's current profile of teaching. Lessons are generally stimulating and teachers use a wide range of good resources to engage and motivate pupils. Assessment information is generally used well to ensure tasks and activities are matched to the needs of most pupils. Teachers' planning focuses on three different

levels of attainment. However, in some classes this does not provide enough variation as there is a very wide range of attainment and differing needs that can not be met precisely using only three differentiated levels. Key questions are identified in teachers' planning and teachers generally use questioning well to identify what pupils have understood. Other adults in the classroom provide skilled support for the particular groups or individual pupils that they work with. In most lessons, pupils take an active role and teachers work hard to promote pupil independence. Pupils know their medium-term targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Improved teaching is having a positive impact on closing the attainment gap between boys and girls.

Teachers provide success criteria for the various activities, but these are not always communicated in language that makes them immediately accessible to the pupils. Although teachers are aware of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, planning does not identify sufficiently how their precise individual needs will be met.

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

- improve the quality of teaching so that by July 2012 it is at least satisfactory and at least 60% of lessons are good – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and are actively involved in their learning, but there remains a small minority of pupils who are too passive and do not offer any contribution in the whole-class sections of lessons. Pupils say that the good behaviour and positive attitudes observed during the visit are not unusual. Pupils show respect and courtesy and require little more than gentle prompting to adhere to the school's high expectations in relation to pupil conduct. Attendance is high and relationships at all levels are good.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders have implemented appropriate systems and procedures to monitor the work of the school and outcomes for pupils. Strategic planning is now clearly based on accurate and timely evaluation of all aspects of the school's work. Robust and systematic monitoring of teaching has ensured that senior leaders have been able to challenge and support staff to improve their practice. Actions taken to improve teaching have resulted in a significant improvement in the profile of teaching across the school. However, some of the improvements are only recent and good or better practice is not fully embedded.

Subject leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They are involved in monitoring activities in their areas of responsibility and this informs school self-evaluation. Middle leaders are increasingly accountable for driving improvement.

The governing body has taken a more strategic role and, following training for governors and re-structuring of the governing body, is now better placed to challenge and support the school to improve.

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

- improve the quality of leadership and management – good.

External support

The school has rightly taken ownership of managing and prioritising the support provided by the local authority and partner school so that any support provided is now more closely aligned to the school's needs. This has had a positive impact on accelerating the rate of improvement. The impact of the support is most evident in rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.