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21 March 2013

Miss Joanne Erasmus
Headteacher
Turnfurlong Junior School
Turnfurlong Lane
Aylesbury
HP21 7PL

Dear Miss Erasmus

Special measures monitoring inspection of Turnfurlong Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 19–20 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed in any subject.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Buckinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure that all pupils make at least good progress, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - providing more opportunities for them to write at length and to consolidate their writing skills in other lessons
 - improving their skills when undertaking mathematical investigations.

- By Easter 2013, improve the quality of teaching and learning to at least good by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information effectively to raise expectations and to challenge all groups of pupils, particularly the more able
 - eliminating inadequate teaching and ensuring all pupils make more rapid progress in lessons and over time
 - improving the quality of marking so that pupils consistently receive regular guidance to improve their work
 - making certain that all lessons proceed at an appropriate pace, engaging pupils in learning
 - making sure teachers use questioning strategies effectively.

- As a matter of urgency, strengthen the capacity for sustaining school improvement by:
 - improving the skills of senior and middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and in taking action to address weaknesses
 - ensuring that school development plans clearly identify the desired outcomes so that success can be evaluated
 - developing the skills of the governing body in holding senior leaders to account for pupils' achievements and the pace of school improvement.

Report on the second monitoring inspection of 19–20 March 2013

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents. He observed 13 parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers. The inspector had detailed discussions with the headteacher, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, the headteacher of the link infant school and a representative from the local authority.

Context

One teacher has been appointed temporarily to cover the teacher who remains on long-term sick leave. Two new literacy and numeracy coordinators have been appointed. Two further teachers have been appointed to replace two who left, one in Year 6 and the other a music teacher. There are two members of staff on maternity leave and these are being covered by supply teachers.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils continue to make good progress. This is especially the case in improving pupils' writing skills and pupils' ability to tackle problems in mathematical investigations. In many of the lessons observed, pupils were expected to use their developing literacy skills to write imaginatively and accurately in topics ranging from investigating Egyptian artefacts, to analysing how Egyptian artists painted their wall pictures. There has been a big focus on pupils acquiring appropriate vocabulary in different subjects and this is clearly evident in the work pupils produce in their books. In all lessons observed there was more stretch and challenge for the more able pupils than at the time of the previous visit. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where pupils were challenged to provide well-reasoned explanations for how a straight line can be plotted from different equations.

The quality of teaching

Since the previous visit, there has been a highly effective drive to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better in all lessons. This in part is a result of the good work undertaken by the Teaching School Partnership to support and improve the quality of teaching in the school. Teachers have responded well to new ideas and are better at asking probing questions. New teachers are being inducted well and there are more examples of outstanding practice in the school. Teachers' marking has improved overall and there are examples of exemplary marking. However, this very high quality of marking is not yet embedded across the school in all books.

Teachers clearly understand well what is required for pupils to attain their challenging targets, and this is why pupils are now making much better progress. Teachers use assessment data more accurately to ensure that different groups of pupils are tracked and monitored effectively. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium or who have special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and thus make as good progress as their peers.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils continues to be good and in some instances exemplary. Pupils are polite and are motivated to learn in lessons. They grow in confidence through the school and regularly ask penetrating and interesting questions about their work. Pupils continue to be safe at school. Attendance remains above average.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The good arrangements for supporting and improving the leadership and management of the school identified on the previous visit continue to have a very positive impact on the quality of leadership. This is evident in the growing confidence of the headteacher and her senior team to initiate, and drive forward, key school improvement strategies. The Executive Headteacher has been able to draw back from close oversight of leadership development in the school, but continues to provide good staff support from her school for improving the quality of leadership of pupils with special educational needs. The staff changes that have been made have strengthened the quality of teaching and good support is in place to ensure new teachers are inducted well. The promotion of equal opportunity continues to improve. Improvements in the curriculum, especially in providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills, are now being embedded well. Middle managers are much more confident about undertaking leadership responsibilities for their curriculum areas and procedures which were relatively new at the time of the previous visit are being embedded effectively. As a consequence of these developments, teachers feel very positive about the strengthened learning culture in the school.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support for the school. The effective consultant support in English and mathematics has had a very positive impact on improving teaching skills and approaches in these two subjects. The good support from the teaching school has improved the general quality of teaching markedly since the previous inspection. The highly effective support provided by the Interim Executive Board has led to more confident and capable leadership at senior level and increasingly at middle manager level. The headteacher and staff are now much more capable of leading the school and the local authority has begun to reduce the intensity of some of its support.