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6 December 2013

Miss J Erasmus
The Headteacher
Turnfurlong Junior School
Turnfurlong Lane
Aylesbury
HP21 7PL

Dear Miss Erasmus

Special measures monitoring inspection of Turnfurlong Junior School

Following my visit John Worgan and Helen Bailey, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 4 and 5 December 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 fourth 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.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Buckinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes
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 fourth monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 December 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other leaders, representatives of the interim executive board and the shadow governing body, groups of teachers, groups of pupils, the headteacher of the link infant school and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed 21 lessons and analysed pupils' work and teachers' marking.

Context

Two teachers and one teaching assistant have left since the previous monitoring visit. Three teachers, two teaching assistants, and a new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2013. The interim executive board has established a shadow governing body.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' attainment remains above average. The proportion of pupils making at least reasonable progress is improving, especially in reading and mathematics. Pupils' progress in writing is often slower, particularly that of the most able pupils. Evidence from pupils' work across a range of subjects, however, suggests that this has only recently begun to improve. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are making the same progress as their peers, and sometimes more. However, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs generally make less progress than other pupils. Pupils' progress is not rapid enough when the pupils join the school, but this improves as they get older.

The quality of teaching

The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is increasing. Consequently, more pupils are now making faster progress in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is good and teachers challenge pupils effectively. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the pupils were given problems to solve that were sufficiently difficult and the teacher extended pupils' thinking through skilful questioning. The quality and impact of teachers' marking have improved significantly. Pupils now receive very regular feedback about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Pupils increasingly make good use of this advice to improve their work.

However, current improvements in teaching have not yet fully addressed pupils' past underachievement. Teachers do not always make effective use of information about pupils' previous achievement to precisely match tasks in lessons to pupils' abilities. Extra support, designed to increase pupils' progress, particularly for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, has not yet had a measurable impact on

their achievement. Some teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, but this is inconsistent.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well around the school and are polite. They work hard in lessons and want to do their best. In many lessons they work together well and are keen to help each other learn. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Some Year 6 pupils act as peer mediators, helping to solve any problems between pupils, which is having a positive effect on pupils' behaviour. Pupils say that they feel very safe at school.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders are taking effective action to improve teaching. The deputy headteacher has made a good start which has helped accelerate improvements in teaching. As a result, the proportion of teaching that is good or better continues to grow and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Although other leaders have begun to play a role in improving teaching, this remains underdeveloped. These leaders do not monitor teaching regularly enough. Leaders have recently begun to improve provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, but this has not yet had a significant impact on the achievement of these pupils. It is not clear what future improvements leaders will make since the current improvement plan does not extend beyond December 2013.

Members of the interim executive board continue to offer strong support and challenge for school leaders. This makes a significant contribution to the school's continuing improvement. They have rightly established a shadow governing body that has recently begun to work alongside the interim executive board. However, there is as yet no robust plan for the transition from the interim executive board to the new governing body. It is unclear, therefore, when this transition will happen and what training new governors will need in order to maintain the same level of support and challenge.

External support

The teaching school, Turnfurlong Infant School, has stopped supporting the school. This is because leaders are now able to make the necessary improvements themselves. A strong partnership between the two schools has been established as a result of the work they have done together in the past. The local authority has rightly reduced the support it is providing. The monitoring officer continues to visit the school to evaluate its progress, providing valuable advice and guidance to leaders and teachers.