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Mrs S Uff
Headteacher
Jolesfield CofE Primary School
Littleworth Lane
Partridge Green
Horsham
RH13 8JJ

Dear Mrs Uff

Special measures monitoring inspection of Jolesfield Church of England Primary School

Following my visit with Elizabeth Farr, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 February 2014, 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 June 2013. 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 after consultation with me and with my approval.

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, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 by ensuring teachers:
 - conduct lessons at a suitably brisk pace to maximise learning and pupils' engagement
 - accurately assess how well pupils are learning and provide tasks that take full account of pupils' prior learning and have enough challenge for pupils' varying abilities
 - make effective use of teaching assistants throughout the lesson to ensure they have a strong impact on pupils' learning
 - always mark pupils' work, regularly showing pupils how to move on in their learning and giving pupils opportunities to respond to this advice.

- Accelerate rates of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils always record and present their work accurately and with care
 - improving the thoroughness and frequency of the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1, giving staff training where needed
 - giving pupils more opportunities to deepen their understanding through working together or alone, without direction from an adult, and to use and apply their skills in different contexts.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - rapidly carrying out an accurate and detailed analysis of the rates of progress for different groups of pupils and responding to this accordingly
 - creating sharply focused improvement plans that show clearly what will be done and by whom, the targets that are expected to be reached and how progress towards them will be checked
 - evaluating the quality of teaching rigorously and accurately
 - implementing consistent systems for recording incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including how matters have been resolved and the involvement of parents and carers in the process.

- Improve governors' ability to understand information about pupils' achievement and strengthen the challenge they provide to school leaders. An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 and 12 February 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the advisory headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority, and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese. They also spoke informally with a group of parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. Teaching and learning in all classes were observed, mostly jointly with senior staff. Ten other briefer visits to lessons were also undertaken to observe behaviour and to check the quality of marking in pupils' books. Aspects of safeguarding were checked.

Context

Since the previous visit the joint headteacher arrangement has come to an end with the retirement of one member of this team at the end of December. The other team member has taken sole responsibility for the headship of the school, working four days each week. One class has had, and another will soon have, a change of teacher, and additional teaching assistants and an extra midday supervisor have been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' achievement is improving, but at very different rates across classes. Pupils in Year 6 are now making good progress as a result of very good teaching and well-planned intervention and one-to-one support for individuals. Progress in Years 3 and 5 is now much more secure but progress in Year 4 is less so. The school's measures of pupils' progress since the beginning of the year are complicated by the need to revisit previous measures of the standards attained, due to what was previously poor assessment practice. Teachers' understanding of the attainment of every pupil is now much more accurate and is a good basis on which to gauge progress and plan teaching. Progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 is still slower than in reading and writing due to the legacy of underperformance. The school is tackling this with vigour and there are signs of pupils' increasing confidence with calculation strategies and problem solving. The previously poor progress made by girls in mathematics is still patchy and this is currently a priority for all teachers.

Improvements in pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 are secure. Progress in writing, reading and mathematics has improved, but an insufficient focus on the specific needs of different groups of learners is preventing good progress being made, particularly in Year 1. For example, while more is expected of the most able they are not often given different work. Some teachers are not yet managing the transitions between different activities in lessons well. Pupils' achievement in the Reception class is now good. This is because activities are very well matched to pupils' needs, and assessment is used

very well; learning journals are used to identify next steps and to recognise and value parents' contributions.

Pupils' progress in phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved markedly due to good leadership, much better checking and recording of every pupil's progress, some good training provided to staff, and close monitoring to check that what teachers have learned is carried through into classroom practice. Phonics is now being used well throughout the school, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. Parents and carers enjoyed the 'letters and sounds' information evening and are better placed to support their children.

The achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is improving due to well-targeted expenditure which is then evaluated to gauge its impact.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving in many year groups because of good in-school training, the impact of local authority support, useful link-school collaborative working and planning, and teachers' better understanding of what good and outstanding teaching can be like from their visits to other schools.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception class is consistently good. In one observed lesson some good mathematical vocabulary was developed to the point where pupils could accurately name three-dimensional shapes. Opportunities to promote good quality learning are maximised by offering structure and purpose to every individual's activities and using skilled questioning. As a consequence, parents and carers are pleased with the progress their children are making in the Reception class.

Assessment is now understood and used much better. The quality of pupils' work is now judged accurately by most teachers, and there are clearer links between this better assessment practice and teachers' better planning for lessons. A new whole-school assessment scheme for recording and analysing achievement in mathematics is in place. This is giving teachers more insight into how aspects of the subject relate to each other, and where gaps in pupils' understanding and skills may hold them back. This clearer understanding of how well pupils are learning has served to raise teachers' aspirations and their expectations of pupils' standards of work, particularly in Key Stage 2.

A range of new teaching techniques is evident in many classrooms. Many pupils welcome the opportunity to work in small groups and sometimes alone, practising skills previously taught. There is now a much greater emphasis on how work is presented, and some signs of improvement. Nevertheless, the impact of these new approaches is still too variable; there is a strong correlation between the extent to which teachers understand their real purpose, and the impact on learning.

Marking and feedback to pupils are now clearer and more useful. The marking policy is implemented in all classes but more effectively in some than others. For example,

some pupils said that their reading activities are not always marked. The best practice is at Key Stage 2 where there are good links between marking and individual pupils' targets; these pupils spoke positively about how useful the pink and green coding of their work was to them. Enthusiastic and lively feedback on work in Year 6 provides a much needed boost to pupils' confidence.

Teaching assistants are now involved more strategically in pupils' learning. Some good training has recently taken place with St Lawrence's Primary School and the teaching assistants are enthusiastic to broaden the nature of their work in classrooms. They question and support pupils more closely in all year groups, and play an important part in completing observational assessments in the Reception class. Some do not yet show enough initiative, for example in responding during whole-class discussions to support individuals who need specific help with particular ideas.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a calm and safe place for pupils. The vast majority of lessons involve pupils working happily and willingly, and wanting to succeed and do well. The school's response to recording behaviour problems is now much more systematic – instances of misbehaviour are now recorded in detail and there are appropriate follow-up actions, including making it clear when parents or carers should be contacted and involved.

However, there are indications that there has not yet been enough improvement in the day-to-day management of low-level behavioural issues. Some pupils still worry that occasionally silly behaviour by others in lessons prevents them working hard, and that this is not always addressed by the class teacher effectively. Some feel that other pupils are occasionally unkind to them on the playground or around the school, and that staff do not address this consistently. The school is aware of this and has begun to amend the behaviour policy, working with staff, pupils and parents and carers to define in precise and clear terms what everyone's expectations are of all members of the school community.

A very small number of pupils present particularly challenging behaviour, for a range of reasons. They are given good support by teachers and dedicated teaching assistants, and their occasionally poor behaviour is not allowed to disturb the learning of others.

Attendance has improved since last year and is currently high. Pupils' punctuality to school is usually good.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher is leading the school with determination and high levels of commitment. She shows enthusiasm in rising to the challenge of bringing about the significant improvements required, and skill in managing the changes involved. She commands the confidence of the governors, the local authority and the diocese. Both

assistant headteachers, and the special educational needs coordinator, are contributing effectively to the leadership of the school.

Improvements in the quality of teaching are being led well. The headteacher and senior staff have a keen insight into the nature of good teaching, and they gauge the quality of teaching accurately. Mathematics, phonics and provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have stronger leadership, and this is beginning to support better progress by groups of pupils in many classes.

Staff show a good understanding of what is being asked of them this year, and a willingness to work together with the headteacher to achieve it. They feel well led. Those that do not yet grasp the reasons for some changes still show trust that the headteacher has the best interests of the pupils at heart and, in the words of one, 'knows what she's doing'.

The good quality support from the local authority is being used wisely in the school. The headteacher is already beginning to orchestrate this support to match the priorities she has identified in the school improvement plan, and in response to improvements already brought about. For example, the nature of the working relationship with the advisory headteacher was established clearly from the outset so as to enable staff and parents and carers to understand this partnership, and to avoid any confusion with what was a previously shared responsibility for the leadership of the school.

The governing body has undertaken a full review of its work and has very usefully reshaped and redefined its role in supporting school improvement. Governors have made a number of responses to the need to improve the quality of their work, including undertaking training in the use of information about pupils' achievements, and establishing much closer connections with the day-to-day work of the school through, for example, appointing a mathematics link governor and a governor who oversees provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and attaching governors to each class. The newly formed Quality and Standards Committee closely monitors progress against the school's detailed and exhaustive improvement plan, and ensures that the desired outcomes at each point in the year are achieved. Governors now have much greater confidence, skill and understanding of how to offer strong support and challenge to the school's leadership, and to hold it to account for ensuring that standards rise rapidly and securely.

External support

The local authority is providing good quality support for the school. It has brokered advisory support from the headteacher of a neighbouring school, Upper Beeding Primary School, who is providing leadership for the school on Fridays each week and is also working with the headteacher for one further day each week. The local authority and the diocese have also helped the school to establish fruitful links with another local outstanding school, St Lawrence CE Primary School, whose staff are supporting developments in senior and middle leadership and helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Other local authority advisors provide good quality

help with improving standards in mathematics, as well as with strategic aspects of the leadership of the school, including the establishment of good systems to support better use of information about pupils' achievement. The local authority led the very useful review of governance, and has provided an additional local authority governor. It is assisting the governors with the performance management of the headteacher as well as the further development of governance.