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Mrs Corinne Martinez
Four Lanes Community Junior School
Hanmore Road
Chineham, Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG24 8PQ

Dear Mrs Martinez

Special measures monitoring inspection of Four Lanes Community Junior School

Following my visit with Juliet Ward, Additional Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 June, 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 October 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 (NQTs) before the next monitoring inspection after discussion with me about the support available.

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 Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale

Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers use the information they hold on pupils to make sure learning activities are not too easy or too difficult for the different groups in their classes
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their skills in mathematics
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve, especially the more able.

- Ensure that all pupils consistently make at least good progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:
 - developing and consolidating pupils' basic calculation skills and their ability to apply them in solving mathematical problems
 - ensuring that more-able and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are set challenging tasks that enable them to make faster progress.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that school leaders use performance information they hold on pupils more efficiently to compare the progress that different groups of pupils make
 - developing new middle leaders so that they can effectively evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and the development of the curriculum
 - ensuring the governing body is rigorous in its evaluation of the school and particularly in its monitoring of the impact of actions on raising achievement of different groups of pupils.

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 18 and 19 June 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the leadership consultant and her deputies, year leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), groups of pupils, parents and carers, the Chair of the Governing Body and 10 other governors, and two representatives from the local authority.

Context

A deputy headteacher, SENCO and a new class teacher have joined the school since the last monitoring inspection. Six new governors have joined the governing body.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school has stabilised its staffing, and teachers and support staff have been working together to improve pupils' progress. This has improved the quality of teaching in the school and the progress of pupils is accelerating across year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. The rate of acceleration is greater in most year groups in reading and mathematics than it is in writing. Teachers now hold regular mathematics meetings with pupils. In these meetings pupils practise and hone their mathematical problem-solving and calculation skills while working at their own level of competence. This has helped boost their mathematics progress. More-able pupils are making better progress in mathematics and reading than they were at the time of the last full inspection. This is due to better teaching setting more challenging tasks. The school is aware that it needs to improve the ability of more-able pupils to write at the highest levels.

Within the four year groups, of three classes, there is variability in the progress of pupils in different classes; this is closely linked to the quality of teaching that pupils experience. The gaps in progress, for some groups of pupils, noted at the last full inspection still remain and in some cases have widened. In the case of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, slower progress is partially due to the school not having a SENCO until January and then her not being fully in post until April. As a result, the coordination of intervention and support work with pupils has only recently become better organised. This has led to some pupils making limited progress while their peers have accelerated; the gap in performance has widened.

The achievement of Year 6 pupils eligible to receive the pupil premium was poor in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013. Pupils eligible for pupil premium are making better progress in the school and in Year 3 achievement is good. However, in Years 4, 5 and 6, attainment gaps between those eligible for pupil premium and

their peers remain too wide. For many pupils gaps are starting to close in writing and mathematics. The school knows it needs to boost achievement in reading for older pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last full inspection. Inspectors agree with the school's thorough monitoring. This shows that there is more consistently good teaching and that inadequate teaching has been eradicated. The improvements in some teachers' practice are relatively recent so the impact on pupils' attainment is variable. The most consistently high-quality teaching is by the year leaders, all of whom are new to the school since September 2013. Together with other new appointments, these leaders have ensured greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across their year groups. As a result, more pupils make accelerated progress, and the teachers are using this information effectively as they plan for subsequent lessons. For example, notes on pupils' achievement during mathematics lessons are used to address further support for some, and greater challenge for others.

Good progress has been made in supporting teachers in planning for and teaching mathematics. A leading practitioner from a neighbouring school has held staff training to develop mathematics across the curriculum, and has included workshops with parents and carers of pupils in Year 6. This means the pupils have far more opportunities to develop their numeracy skills throughout the curriculum. Lessons are planned carefully; clear routines and smooth classroom organisation mean that there are few disruptions to break up the pace of learning. Pupils now usually, but not always, have more time to work in depth and at length on the tasks they are set.

Teachers and teaching assistants work cohesively and this reflects their increasing understanding and focus on what pupils should be learning. Occasionally, teachers and their assistants are not yet confident or flexible enough to move away from their planning if activities are not working well or pupils show that they already grasp the skill being taught. Equally, where teaching is less effective teachers are not always sufficiently clear in their explanations before setting pupils to work. This leads to pupils being slow to start and less engaged with their learning.

Teachers and their assistants are developing good questioning skills to get the pupils thinking, discussing, explaining and extending their ideas. This is a big step forward but there is still more to do to make sure the pitch is just right, particularly to challenge the thinking of more-able pupils, in their writing for example. As pupils show they are capable of achieving more, adults are starting to raise expectations even further. All adults provide good role models, cooperating well, encouraging positive relationships, celebrating achievement and giving the pupils interesting learning opportunities.

Most of teachers' marking is thorough and useful, particularly in English and mathematics. The system of pupils acting on the guidance they are given the following morning during registration is helping them to reach higher standards. Pupils understand how to check their books and respond to the guidance without further prompting. The marking of work in other subjects, particularly science, is far more variable. In some classes where there have been several changes of teacher, there is work which has not been marked for some time.

The learning environment is lively and stimulating, both in classrooms and in the corridors; the school looks and feels like a place where interesting learning happens. Classrooms are well ordered and displays are useful. During this monitoring inspection, pupils used wall displays and 'working walls' to find specific adjectives or starters for their writing.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There have been further improvements in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour and these contribute to the positive atmosphere in the school. Parents and carers commented on how much happier and enthusiastic their children were about their learning. For example, parents and carers know their children are having mathematics sessions where they challenge each other to find different answers, and, subsequently, they challenge their parents and carers to find even more.

Pupils are attentive and cooperative in lessons and they are polite and friendly around the school. They know how to behave. Inappropriate behaviour is well managed and the pupils respond well to clear guidelines, humour and high expectations. Pupils say there are no bullies in the school, and that if anyone has 'an off day' it is dealt with quickly and without fuss. Pupils feel safe; they know all about keeping safe in and out of school. They also know the rules for keeping safe when using the internet.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

You and your deputies have stabilised the school well with the support of the local authority. Careful recruitment has significantly boosted leadership capacity since the last full inspection. Performance information about pupils is used efficiently by year leaders to plan with other teachers in their year groups to the benefit of pupils' learning. Inspectors found that leaders' assessments were accurate when checking pupils' work with senior leaders in Years 5 and 6. Leaders at all levels and governors are now very aware of how groups of pupils are progressing. They know very incisively where accelerated learning is starting to improve pupils' previous underachievement and where more still needs to be done.

Middle leaders (those responsible for subjects, year groups or aspects) have formed a cohesive team since January; the four year leaders enjoy the opportunities now available to exchange ideas and work together. They have worked to coach and improve the teaching in their teams, which has brought benefit to pupils. External expert support from the local authority has in turn helped leaders at all levels perform their roles more effectively.

The new SENCO has reviewed the previous work of the school with pupils and found that it needed significant improvement in both quality and coordination to be fit for purpose. This review has been carried out with the support of the local authority special educational needs inspector and in full consultation with the link governor. The programme of intervention and support has been rationalised and pupils' progress is checked more assiduously. This is starting to show improvements in some pupils' learning. However, new systems have not been in place long enough to have significant impact.

The governing body has audited its skills and six new appointments have bolstered governor capacity. Local authority governors are buddied with new governors to support their work. Governors have been more systematic about supporting and challenging the work of the school. More visits have taken place to independently evaluate the work of the school and these evaluations are then discussed at governing body meetings. Governors, including parent governors, have liaised with parents and carers to gather their views. They know that although there are remaining pockets of dissatisfaction among their parents and carers, the numbers are decreasing as the school improves.

External support

The local authority has offered extensive and well-received support to the school. You have managed this support very well to ensure that it has helped you move the school forward. Personalised, individualised support for most members of staff has helped them do their jobs more effectively. Contacts with other local authority schools have helped you recruit several effective teachers and leaders since last September.