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20 June 2014

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

Dear Mrs Uff

Special measures monitoring inspection of Jolesfield CofE Primary School

Following my visit with Louise Adams, Seconded Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 June 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 third 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 third monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 June 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised policies and documents including the development plan and the school's self-evaluation. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the advisory headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, teachers, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative from the local authority. They also spoke informally with a group of parents at the beginning of the school day. Teaching and learning were observed in 12 lessons, some jointly with senior staff, and across all classes, except Year 6 who were out of school at the time of the visit. Three briefer visits to lessons were also undertaken to check the quality of marking and feedback, and the quality of work in pupils' books. Aspects of safeguarding were checked.

Context

Since the previous visit, the school has appointed a new teacher in Year 2, a teacher has returned from maternity leave and two new teachers have been appointed for September. In addition, the school has appointed a new premises manager and two teaching assistants.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' achievement continues to improve. In most classes pupils are catching up on their previously slow rates of progress, and beginning to show skills and knowledge more in keeping with their potential. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have made particularly rapid progress this year. Key Stage 2 test outcomes for Year 6 are anticipated to be in line with national expectations in reading and writing, and better in mathematics than has been the case in the school over recent years. Pupils in Year 5 have also made significant gains in their learning but are still not working at the expected level, particularly in writing, despite the better teaching this year. Pupils in Year 4 are currently making good progress in reading and writing, but their achievement in mathematics is a significant cause for concern. The school is responding by providing alternative provision in mathematics this term, and identifying ways of accelerating pupils' progress in this subject early next year. Pupils in Year 3 now make secure progress in reading and better progress in writing; their achievement in mathematics is weaker, but there are plans to accelerate it this term.

Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 is also improving. Many make the progress expected of them, but still relatively few are moving forwards rapidly in their learning. In Year 1, pupils make adequate progress and Year 2 pupils are currently catching up rapidly and securely on previously slower progress. Children in Reception are thriving because they benefit from very good teaching; they are being very well prepared for Key Stage 1 next year.

The current drive to support the quality and breadth of pupils' reading through a new approach to guided reading is already causing an improvement in pupils' skills and evidence of more reading for enjoyment. Phonics teaching is now strong enough to underpin reliably better standards of reading and writing in Key Stage 1 through the daily lessons and responsive approach to grouping and regrouping according to need, and also for older pupils who need support with these skills.

The school is now monitoring the progress of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs closely and accurately. This means that they can be better supported both in and out of lessons. Consequently, the quality of their learning is now sound and there is the capacity for it to improve strongly. The progress made by pupils eligible for the pupil premium is also the subject of careful scrutiny. The school spends this extra money appropriately, but not yet with the high level of precision and close accountability required to close the gaps between these pupils' attainment and that of their peers.

Throughout the school the presentation and organisation of work in books are in need of improvement. A scrutiny of pupils' books reveals a lack of clear or consistently enforced expectations of how work is organised on the page, or whether particular kinds of pens, or pencil, should be used. Pupils' handwriting is untidy; in too many cases, letters and words are not formed carefully.

The quality of teaching

Teaching continues to improve. Many teachers now concentrate on promoting good quality and secure learning, and are therefore teaching lessons that cater for pupils' needs much better. The best teaching poses real and exciting challenges to pupils to extend their current grasp of topics and, at the same time, addresses gaps in their learning as a result of previously weaker teaching. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics activity, the perimeter and area of rectangles was taught in a manner that encouraged good mathematical reasoning but, at the same time, allowed pupils not confident with the basic ideas to catch up quickly. The teacher constantly monitored pupils' understanding of the work and was skilled enough to realise the need to, in her words, 'start from the beginning again' with one group. In another lesson, Year 5 pupils developed their understanding of what makes a good story. The logical flow of ideas across the various elements of the lesson was clear to everyone, and pupils responded to the challenges involved with interest and quiet enthusiasm. The small amount of less effective teaching seen was associated with a lack of clarity around the explanation of basic elements of a topic, or a lack of focus on the quality of learning actually taking place.

Teaching in Reception is well planned and carefully structured to meet the needs of all children. In one session observed the teacher used the fruit snack to teach children how to count all 73 strawberries. Teaching is ambitious for the children's learning and is quick to recognise who can do more. The indoor area is well

organised so the children can choose from a wide range of learning activities, and the outdoor area is improving.

Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are now leading to activities that are more closely matched to pupils' understanding. Teachers respond to the needs of different groups in lessons sooner and more effectively. The quality of marking is still uneven. Where marking is related to the aims of the learning, and is informative and requires a response, pupils value it as an important support to their learning. Not all teachers are yet providing consistently good feedback on pupils' written work, using the various systems of 'tickled pink', 'green for growth', and purple for pupils' responses.

The quality of teaching assistants' contributions to learning is still very variable, but there are signs of improvements. More teaching assistants play an active role in classrooms and respond to pupils' needs more imaginatively and skilfully. However, some are still not using a wide enough range of strategies to enable pupils to think through problems for themselves and develop better learning habits.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is managing challenging behaviour much more consistently and effectively. Records of behaviour incidents are now used to identify problems and find ways of helping pupils to improve their behaviour. This has helped to reduce the number and impact of moderate and serious disciplinary problems. Pupils have been involved in re-working the rewards system and the new green balloons system has proved a great motivator.

Behaviour in lessons is also better because pupils are now offered more appropriate challenge and are supported in their learning more reliably. Few incidents of pupils wasting their own time, or disrupting the learning of others, were seen during the inspection visit, and pupils told inspectors that they generally work better in class now. Many appreciated the better teaching assistant support for the very small number of pupils whose behaviour could be disruptive to everyone else's learning.

Steps have been taken to ensure a more orderly start to the school day and to make it clear to pupils that good behaviour is expected right from their arrival at school in the morning. Pupils' behaviour around the site during the day is not reliably good, however. Some pupils get away with boisterous behaviour at times when staff are not supervising closely and do not insist upon the highest standards. This is because, although there are now clear rules for the supervision of pupils at break and lunch times, senior staff do not always ensure that they are enforced rigorously.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher continues to lead the school with determination, skill and a single-minded commitment to obtaining good outcomes for all pupils. Therefore, staff

morale is good and there is a palpable sense of the school becoming stronger and more confident in its work.

Governors now play an important role in school improvement, offering significantly better challenge and support as a result of the training they have undertaken, and their high levels of commitment to the pupils and staff at the school. They hold the headteacher to account much more positively, through governing body meetings and the two-weekly meetings between the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and the headteacher. Improvement planning is thorough and is translated into weekly actions. Self-evaluation continues to be thorough, accurate and useful. The school has an accurate sense of outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching, and continues to become more self-critical.

The headteacher and senior staff are continuing to improve the quality of teaching by providing good training and individual support for teachers on specific aspects of their classroom practice. Monitoring of the quality of teaching is undertaken regularly and this helps to ensure that improvements become embedded. Judgements of the quality of teaching are regularly checked against the views of local authority advisers, and are accurate. Some records of lesson observations show that there is sometimes too much concentration on the mechanics of teaching at the expense of gauging the specific impact on pupils' learning.

Senior and middle leaders are developing better leadership skills. While the headteacher still maintains close supervision of all key initiatives, and personally holds staff to account for achievement and the quality of teaching. There are plans to pass this responsibility on to the assistant headteachers and to hold them to account for standards. Senior and middle leaders are also strengthening their capacity to respond to everyday issues around behaviour, and handling concerns from parents and staff, in order to strengthen and clarify the leadership and management structure.

The school obtains the views and opinions of parents about its work through questionnaires. Their analyses corresponded with the views expressed by parents to inspectors during the inspection. Parents feel that the school is improving because it is well led, and that their children are learning more and are better cared for now. Parents appreciate the better quality of communication they now have with the school. There are now closer working links with many parents, as shown in the good work by some to improve the appearance of aspects of the school grounds. Many outside areas are now significantly more attractive and pleasant for pupils, and staff, as a result.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good quality support to the school. The headteacher is ensuring that the range of support provided is coherent and matches the school's needs well, in her work with the school improvement adviser. For

example, support for mathematics is currently scaled down in response to the school's wish to implement the outcomes of training provided so far. More support is currently being provided for developing guided reading. The very good working relationship between the headteacher and the temporary advisory headteacher, the headteacher of the nearby Upper Beeding Primary School, has been central to the improvements evident over the last year. This support will be reduced over next term, but close links between the leadership of the two schools are set to continue to enable collaborative work, and the sharing of ideas and strategies. Links with other local schools, such as St Lawrence CE Primary School, continue to be fruitful, especially in their support for improvements in the quality of teaching.