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Mr Matthew Greenhalgh and Mrs Jackie Glover
The Interim Headteachers
Woodlea Primary School
Atholl Road
Whitehill
Bordon
GU35 9QX

Dear Mr Greenhalgh and Mrs Glover

Special measures monitoring inspection of Woodlea Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 and 6 November 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 November 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 not 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 Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to secure rapid progress for all groups of pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1, by ensuring all teachers:
 - receive training to help them understand the capabilities of the groups of pupils they teach and how to use assessment information well, so that they can plan appropriate learning activities
 - plan interesting activities that reflect pupils' interests and aptitudes so that they commit to learning and behave consistently well in lessons
 - plan activities in lessons that follow on logically so that there is a clear development in the way pupils learn about new ideas and they can build on what they know
 - explain what pupils will be learning in simple language so that all pupils can understand what is expected of them
 - develop their questioning skills so that they gain a better understanding of how well pupils are learning and adapt lessons accordingly, depending on pupils' responses
 - set pupils targets and involve them in checking on their progress so that they understand how to improve
 - provide opportunities for pupils to follow up on teachers' guidance in the marking of their books so that they learn by making corrections to their work.
- Raise pupils' attainment by:
 - ensuring pupils practise blending the sounds made by different letters consistently so that they can read unfamiliar words successfully
 - giving pupils effective opportunities to write about their own ideas at length
 - providing mathematical problems that allow pupils to calculate answers for themselves
 - ensuring children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given imaginative activities and can interact with adults who encourage them to explore their ideas further by themselves.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - introducing a rigorous monitoring schedule so that senior leaders can more accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the school
 - ensuring senior leaders enable middle leaders to check the quality of provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility
 - making sure middle leaders analyse the information they gather to determine priorities for improvement and produce action plans to address these priorities
 - assessing children's current levels of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this information to plan relevant activities that meet all children's developmental needs.
 - ensuring senior leaders hold staff to account for using information about pupils' progress to plan effective lessons that have a positive impact on pupils' learning
 - ensuring governors receive all the information they need and that they use this more effectively to hold all leaders to account.

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 5 and 6 November 2014

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and met with the interim headteachers and other leaders, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body with two other governors, and a representative from the local authority. The inspector spoke with parents at the school gate and made telephone calls to others on request. The inspector examined a range of documents including pupils' work, the school's improvement plans, teachers' planning, information about pupils' progress, records of local authority support and information about the work of governors.

Context

Two new interim headteachers are leading the school this term, one returning after undertaking the role in the spring term. The deputy headteacher and five teachers left in the summer, including the mathematics and English leaders. Five experienced teachers have joined the school, two as assistant headteachers. New leaders for mathematics and English have been appointed from within the team. One assistant headteacher is covering the role of the special educational needs coordinator due to continuing sickness absence. The Vice-Chair of the Governing Body resigned in the summer. Six new governors have joined, filling most vacancies.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Despite some improvement during the spring and summer terms, gaps in pupils' previous learning still undermined their achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2014. Results of national assessments and tests in the summer were a mixed picture.

The proportions of Year 6 pupils who attained the expected level in reading and in writing declined. However, the proportion who made expected progress in reading increased, as did the proportions who made more than expected progress in writing and who attained the higher than expected level. In mathematics, pupils' attainment and progress declined.

At the end of Year 2, the proportions of pupils who attained the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics declined, as did the proportion who attained the higher level in mathematics. However, the proportions attaining the higher than expected levels in reading and writing remained stable.

In the national Year 1 assessment of pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make, the proportion of pupils who achieved the required score increased in the summer compared to the previous year. Although this remained below the national average, the rate of improvement was double the rate of improvement nationally.

At the end of Reception Year in 2014, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development declined compared to the previous year. As a result, more pupils entered Year 1 without the knowledge and skills they need.

This term, from Year 1 to Year 6, pupils are making better progress in English and mathematics. Pupils now write at increasing length and with greater accuracy in their spelling and grammar. In mathematics, pupils now have regular opportunities to solve mathematical problems completely for themselves. The amount of work pupils produce, and the care and pride they show, are also increasing. This improvement is most consistent in Key Stage 2, building successfully on the progress made last year. In Key Stage 1, although pupils' books show rapid progress since September, this marks a recent improvement. Gaps in many pupils' knowledge mean pupils are not able to learn well enough at the level appropriate for their age.

In Reception, parents are rightly delighted with the happy start their children have made, and with clear improvements in the range and quality of activities. This reflects improved teaching. Children are developing good habits for learning, such as cooperation and sharing. However, there is insufficient focus on basic skills for reading, writing and mathematics in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, and the effectiveness of adults' interaction with children remains inconsistent.

The quality of teaching

New and established teachers share a clear vision. Parents overwhelmingly told the inspector that they are delighted with the quality of teaching and care their child has received this term, frequently adding rightly that this is a change for the better.

All teachers are now making better use of assessments to inform their planning, and planning more consistently for logical progress in lessons and over time. Helpful refresher training in September has enabled teachers to develop further the good practice seen in Key Stage 2 in the summer, and to extend this promptly into Key Stage 1. This is leading to the rapid progress seen in books.

Teachers are working hard to develop the curriculum and share ideas. As a result, pupils are more interested and engaged in their learning. A new approach to the wider curriculum means that year groups share topics. Pupils were keen to tell the inspector how much they look forward to, and enjoy, new, practical opportunities such as cooking, pottery and a recent Viking Day.

In Key Stage 2, what pupils will learn in lessons and their individual targets are now described routinely by teachers in words pupils understand. This is motivating pupils to do their best. The inspector found individual instances where a pupil was unsure, but these have reduced significantly. In Key Stage 1, although teachers diligently use the same approach, pupils have less experience in how to use this information to help them learn well. Although many younger pupils can now say what their targets are, they are often unsure about what they actually mean for their learning.

The use of questions has become a routine feature in Key Stage 2. Teachers use questions effectively to check pupils' understanding and to deepen their knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to be inquisitive, and to use questions themselves, to teachers and to one another, during lessons. In Key Stage 1, the use of questions is more limited and teachers sometimes move learning on too quickly without checking pupils' readiness. Too many younger pupils have not developed the skills they need to listen carefully to their teacher and respond.

Teachers' marking in English and mathematics is now consistently effective in Key Stage 2. Here, 'read and respond time' has become well established, developing to include independent activities with greater challenge. In Key Stage 1, teachers' marking in English and mathematics is equally helpful, but many pupils do not have the skills and interest needed to read and respond well enough. Pupils' work in other subjects is not always marked so diligently, with some unmarked this term, especially in Key Stage 2.

The vast majority of teaching assistants make an increasingly valuable contribution to pupils' learning in the classroom, but not in every case. The school has rightly developed the role of some teaching assistants to ensure that the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are adequately met.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Older pupils value the new opportunities to help others with their learning and at social times. Parents were overwhelmingly positive in their comments to the inspector about behaviour and the way the school deals with any incidents. Because pupils are increasingly engaged in their learning, their concentration and effort are improving all the time, especially in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, teachers are working hard to develop pupils' good habits for learning, working closely with parents. Most parents support their children's good punctuality and attendance. The headteachers are rightly being clear with all parents that every child should be in school every day.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The new interim headteachers have continued the drive for improvement and the school's work has been invigorated by the appointment of new teachers. The pace of change has increased as all staff and governors are now aware of the urgency that is required. The updated school improvement plan is a clear and practical document, driven by aspirational targets for the achievement of all pupils this year.

The headteachers' rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has continued, with prompt observations in all classrooms at the start of the year. This has been followed by regular checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work, and the scrutiny of information about pupils' progress. Helpful feedback is given to teachers, but this is sometimes too broad to promote the urgent improvement in pupils' progress which is required, especially in Key Stage 1 and Reception.

The new assistant headteachers have made their mark by modelling the quality of teaching which the school is now promoting. The Key Stage 1 leader, who also leads English across the school, promptly re-organised the way pupils learn about letters and sounds after noting that the quality of teaching was too variable between groups. As a result, pupils' reading progress in Year 1 and Year 2 accelerated sharply. The Key Stage 2 leader willingly took on the role of special educational needs coordinator and immediately closed gaps in the way the school meets these pupils' needs and communicates with parents. Parents were keen to give positive feedback about the work of both leaders. The new mathematics leader has taken a determined and focused approach to making sure the school implements the new mathematics curriculum effectively, providing a document outlining clearly the required progression.

While there has been an effective focus on the quality of teaching, leaders and teachers still do not have sufficient access to reliable systems for assessing, recording and analysing pupils' progress. These are in development, but they are not fully in place, and adequate consideration is not being given to the exact requirements of the new curriculum for mathematics and English. Systems for assessing and recording children's progress in Reception also remain insufficient.

The governing body successfully ensured full staffing for the new school year and addressed its own recruitment needs. New governors have valuable experience in schools in special measures. This experience and expertise are coming to the fore in a new sense of urgency and a clear focus on holding school leaders to account for the rapid improvement of the school. Recent training has equipped governors for the current recruitment round for a permanent headteacher, and for their role in checking the school's improvement. Governors have devised an appropriate monitoring plan, although this is not adequately focused on the aspects of the school which require the most urgent improvement.

External support

Local authority support continues to be purposeful and effective. The appointment of experienced interim headteachers, arrangements for support from another school, consultant support for teachers, and monitoring by local authority inspectors have all contributed significantly to the school's improvement. The local authority helpfully arranged new governors with the right experience and expertise, and relevant training to meet governors' current needs.