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14 November 2014

Mrs Corinne Martinez  
The Headteacher  
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 Ken Bryan, Additional Inspector, to your school on 12 and 13 November, 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 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 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

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 third monitoring inspection on 12 and 13 November 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, year leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors and two representatives from the local authority.

### **Context**

A new special educational needs coordinator and a class teacher have joined the school since the new last monitoring inspection and a deputy headteacher and another class teacher have returned from absence. Two governors have left the governing body.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The achievement of Year 6 pupils in summer 2014 was variable in reading, writing and mathematics. This was due to some weak teaching and a number of changes to staffing, creating discontinuity during pupils' time at the school. Despite this, pupils made accelerated progress during their Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with the year group that preceded them. Attainment for this year group was significantly above average overall and also in writing. Attainment in mathematics and English was above average. However, pupils' starting points in Year 3 were significantly above average in all subjects and so pupils' final attainment demonstrated weak progress over time. This was particularly true for middle ability pupils, where too few reached Level 5 in reading and mathematics. Although attainment was good overall in writing, pupils did not do well in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test. You and other leaders know that a systematic approach to improving spelling, punctuation and grammar across the school is a desirable next step.

Pupils in the school are now making better progress than they have in previous years. The current Year 6 is on track to provide a further improvement in the school's results. However, some staffing difficulties in Year 4 last year have led to the current Year 5 being behind where leaders would like them to be, particularly in writing.

Attainment gaps that developed because of weaker teaching in the past have begun to close. More careful tracking of, and intervention with, pupils eligible to receive the pupil premium is closing attainment gaps across the school. The school has had a recent change in special educational needs coordinator. The new coordinator has begun to review the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Improved tracking and more incisive targeting of intervention,

both inside and outside the classroom, have already resulted in some big improvements in reading and comprehension scores for pupils. However, the concerted work with this group is relatively recent and there is remaining underachievement.

More able pupils are making more progress than they have in the past due to a strong focus on challenge in teachers' planning and extra stretch sessions put on by the school. However, you and your leaders know that there is still more to be done to ensure that teaching consistently stretches and challenges this group across the curriculum.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teachers now have much better information about pupils' achievement. They are using it constructively in year groups to generate improved planning. As a result, the quality of teaching has continued to improve. Inspectors agree with leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching. The most consistently high quality teaching still resides with the year leaders, with the exception of the universally strong Year 6 team. Further progress has been made in supporting teachers in planning for and developing numeracy skills in mathematics. External consultants from the local authority continue to support year leaders in working with their teams. Year leaders regularly review and plan the taught curriculum with their colleagues, including in mathematics.

Extra challenge is being built into planned lessons. For example, in effective Year 6 mathematics lessons, pupils were applying well their knowledge of mean, median, mode and range. They were challenged to categorise a series of statements about the terms into always, never and sometimes. Pupils were then required to prove to their peers in writing that their reasoning was sound. Withdrawal sessions for the most able mathematicians are also built into the curriculum; a small group was observed solving very enthusiastically linear equations.

Teaching and associated marking and feedback are consistently stronger in the core subjects of mathematics and English where some strong teaching takes place across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants work cohesively together to develop understanding, and pupils and parents appreciate their efforts. In the foundation subjects and science, teaching is less strong. This is due, in part, to relative deficiencies in some teachers' subject knowledge. You and your leaders know that year group and core subject leadership is better developed than that found in the wider curriculum.

Weaker teaching can still result in too little emphasis on checking what pupils understand and whether or not they are ready to move on. This weakness in teachers' skills was seen at the last visit and still occasionally persists. Some teachers and their assistants are not yet confident or flexible enough to move away from their

planning where sharper assessment would indicate it was time to do so. This happens, for example, if activities are too hard and pupils fail to grasp the concept or pupils show that they already understand what is being taught. However, other teachers are now doing this well. For example, in a Year 5 lesson about writing in other cultures, the teacher incisively assessed pupils' understanding of their task and set the pupils to work where she understood it would be productive. The teacher then worked with those who were struggling to get them started and followed up by challenging the most able group to do their best.

Most of teachers' marking remains thorough and useful, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils now usually know what they need to do to improve. You and your leaders know that marking occasionally involves the teacher working harder than the pupil, with superficial pupil responses to comments made. You are considering with staff how best to ensure that teachers' feedback is efficient in maximising a positive impact on pupils' learning. The system of pupils acting on feedback during registration is appreciated by most pupils and helps them to have a good understanding of their next steps.

The learning environment has continued to develop. It is stimulating for pupils, as they frequently use the wall displays and 'working walls' to improve their work. They are also proud when their work makes it on to the wall.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Parents, both through questionnaires and in discussion with inspectors, commented on how happy they are with the atmosphere in the school for their children. Pupils themselves feel happy and safe. They have a good understanding of safe and unsafe situations and know what to do to keep safe. Pupils were very attentive and cooperative in a singing assembly, even when a technical glitch halted proceedings; pupils sang with real enthusiasm. Behaviour in lessons is also good and ensures good learning where teaching is strong. A few pupils who occasionally exhibit inappropriate behaviour are managed very well and all pupils respond well to clear guidelines. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and teachers have increasingly high expectations of learning behaviours. In discussion with inspectors, pupils said that bullying does not exist in the school.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

You have done very well to build the confidence of parents; a recent survey demonstrated that more than 90% would now recommend the school. This was substantiated during conversations with parents who were keen to say how pleased they were with the school and the information they had received at the previous day's parents' evening. One parent was particularly keen to praise your 'stewardship of the school'.

You and your deputies have continued to effectively lead the drive to close the significant gaps in achievement that exist in the school. Although, you have not yet managed to eradicate underachievement, you know you have made a good start and led this journey well. This is exemplified by the high staff morale that now exists at Four Lanes.

Leaders at all levels and governors are now very aware of how groups of pupils are progressing. They know where more still needs to be done and are highly committed to doing it. Middle leadership is working well at year group level and in the core subjects. Coaching programmes are in place and beginning to bear fruit in terms of developing more consistently good teaching. External support from the local authority has helped leaders at all levels perform their roles more effectively; the process of withdrawal has begun now that the leadership team is sustaining improvement. You know that further support may be required to improve the consistency and impact of leadership of, and teaching in, science and the foundation subjects.

The new special educational needs coordinator has achieved a great deal in a short period of time. She has reviewed previous work with the support of the local authority special educational needs inspector, planned, and in some cases delivered, further improvements. The programme of intervention and support has been rationalised in line with the new code of practice. Pupils' progress, following interventions, is starting to accelerate. Changes in leadership in this area have been unfortunate in terms of continuity, but the work done this term has started to be both successful and sustainable.

The governing body is functioning more effectively than it has in the past. Governors now have an incisive understanding of the school's emerging strengths and where the school still needs to do better. They have increased their challenge to you and your senior leaders. To further improve efficiency, the governing body plans to reform soon following an audit of members' skills. This will ensure that all skills needed to drive further improvement are in place.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to offer extensive and well received support to the school. The support for the school has helped the school to improve in terms of both effectiveness and parental perception.