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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 to your school on 3 and 4 December 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 fourth 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 continue to 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 Children's Services for West Sussex and the Diocese of Chichester.

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 December 2014

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, and scrutinised policies and documents including the development plans and the school's self-evaluation. He met with the headteacher, the advisory headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative from the local authority. He had a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese. Eight lessons were observed, some jointly with senior staff, across all classes. Aspects of safeguarding were checked.

Context

Two newly qualified teachers joined the school in September. A new premises manager and several teaching assistants and staff who lead intervention support have also joined the school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Achievement continues to improve. Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 were better than in recent years in many respects. In reading, both the proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them, and the proportion making even better progress, matched national averages. In writing, more made the progress expected, but slightly fewer exceeded expectations. In mathematics, fewer than expected demonstrated in the test that they could make appropriate levels of progress. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils obtaining a secure Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average, but relatively fewer achieved better than this. A much higher proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard in the phonic screening check (which gauges pupils' abilities to associate letters with the sounds they make) than in 2013.

Classes whose learning was affected by previously poor teaching are catching up, and more pupils are beginning to reach expected levels in English and mathematics. Outcomes for Year 6 pupils are set to be better than in 2014, due to currently very good teaching building on these pupils' positive experiences in their Year 5. In Years 3, 4 and 5, achievement is generally secure. Progress across Key Stage 1 is better now in all areas of their learning. In Reception, children's learning and social development continue to be strong because of the well-organised provision and very good quality teaching. Mathematics remains a priority for the school; pupils themselves said that more could be expected of them in this subject.

The school continues to prioritise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Their progress is monitored particularly closely and there is a wide range of intervention strategies in place designed to boost the learning and confidence of individuals when necessary. About two thirds of disadvantaged pupils are making the progress expected of them currently in reading and writing, but only around half are doing so

in mathematics. Provision for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is similarly well organised and their achievement is also closely monitored. As a result, the proportion making the progress expected of them in reading and writing across the school is currently broadly in line with expectations. However, the proportion achieving appropriately in mathematics is lower.

Pupils' work is presented better and organised on the page more thoughtfully. Handwriting is improving, but clearer expectations about some small issues, such as the use of margins and the need for letters to be positioned on the line more carefully, would help to improve presentation further.

The quality of teaching

Teaching continues to improve. This is helping to ensure that pupils make more consistent gains in their learning as they move up the school. Teachers are working successfully to close gaps in pupils' prior learning, as well as to ensure that pupils have access to new challenges appropriate to their age.

Teachers are now planning lessons better so that all groups of pupils can achieve well. The pace of learning is now quicker because teachers now plan how one part of a lesson flows into the next, and manage the transitions effectively. There is more specially adapted work to suit the needs of different groups. However, this is not always well matched to the aims of the lesson, nor do pupils always begin work on it soon enough in lessons. Senior leaders are aware of the need to ensure that more able pupils are offered more sophisticated challenges in every lesson, and therefore have opportunities to achieve at the highest levels.

Teachers are now assessing pupils' achievements accurately. This vital aspect of their work continues to be appropriately closely monitored. Teachers are also acquiring better skills around gauging how well pupils understand the work at various points in a lesson. Some use questioning well and encourage pupils to identify learning points for themselves, through the good use of discussion work. Pupils say that this makes their learning more fun, and that they appreciate having more time to think and plan for themselves. In some lessons pupils are trusted to work much more independently and undertake medium term planning in connection with substantial projects. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were observed planning their contributions to the class planetarium with confidence, because of the class teacher's skilful checking of their awareness of the challenges involved.

Marking is continuing to make an important contribution to better learning. There is some very good practice in the school, for example in Year 6, which is beginning to be used in nearly all classrooms. Feedback is now matched more closely to the learning aims of lessons, and pupils are responding to it more confidently.

Teaching assistants are contributing better to pupils' learning. They usually have a quiet presence, but many now have the confidence to intervene with individual

pupils during teacher-led discussions to give them brief, but important, support. At other times, teaching assistants demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of only offering part of an answer to pupils' questions, or sometimes posing a question in response. In doing so, they are promoting pupils' thinking, not just solving problems for them.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour around the site is now much better due to higher expectations from teachers and playground supervisors. Year 5 play leaders make a good contribution to this. When the bell is rung for the end of playtime, pupils of all ages now line up more smartly, and return to lessons in a much better frame of mind to get back to work.

Behaviour in lessons is generally positive and focused. The new behaviour policy is helping to ensure more consistent responses from staff to the relatively small number of incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils rise to meet challenges cheerfully and successfully for the most part, and say that the new system of 'sun, clouds and rain' is helping them to manage their own behaviour better. There is little time wasting due to silly behaviour because the teaching is better now. It is clear that behaviour in some classes has improved significantly this term.

All aspects of safeguarding meet statutory requirements, but some small administrative adjustments to the single central record, which records the checks made of adults working with children, are required to match the most recent legislation. The school places an appropriate high priority on safeguarding and child protection and all aspects of policies and staff training are up to date.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher continues to lead the school strongly and successfully. She shows great determination to improve every child's learning and ensure their happiness and well-being. She is the driving force behind the improvements evident since the previous inspection. Her senior team is carrying out its responsibilities with a far greater sense of confidence, and is using considerably more initiative now. Roles and responsibilities are clearer to staff and parents, and the school runs much more smoothly on a day-by-day basis as a result. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had had a period of absence due to illness, but the school continued to function efficiently and effectively. This is a tribute to her successful work to improve senior leadership capacity.

Middle leaders are also developing their understanding of their roles. All now have clear job descriptions, and there are improvement plans in place in all subjects to define the outcomes expected and steer actions over the year. These plans are closely associated with the school's overall, good quality, improvement planning documents. The extent to which middle leaders are ready to steer improvements confidently in achievement in their areas is very variable, however. Some, such as in

English and mathematics, and other subjects delivered by one or two key staff, such as computing, are beginning to make useful strategic contributions; others are at an early stage in doing so.

Systems to manage performance are now well organised and effective. They use judgements of the quality of teaching which take regard of outcomes for pupils, and a wide range of other evidence. All teachers are challenged and supported to develop their skills over the course of each annual cycle.

Pupils' achievement is tracked closely and judgements are based on reliable assessment information. This drives the wide ranging provision to support particular groups of pupils in each year group who need more support at various times. Systems to monitor the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils, are detailed and useful. They concentrate on specific gains in learning for each pupil very usefully. They do not yet yield information about the overall achievement of these priority groups readily, however.

Governors continue to exercise close oversight of the school's work. They have taken practical steps to inform themselves directly about the views of parents. They take a particular interest in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and ensure that there are good plans in place to identify and respond to their needs, and to ensure that the right actions are taken to be able to respond. It is unclear how they are gauging the impact of this work, however, as some of the descriptions of anticipated outcomes are still rather vague.

External support

The local authority continues to give the school good support. An adviser meets with the headteacher regularly and offers good challenge and advice around achievement analyses and general leadership and management issues, and provides some training and support for other leaders. Another local authority officer has been usefully supporting developments in mathematics, English and in assessment. The local authority is funding provision for a catch-up programme in English and mathematics for Year 6 this term. The advisory headteacher, appointed and funded by the local authority, continues to provide excellent support for the school's leadership and management.

The diocese is very supportive of the school and has played an important role in some high level strategic discussions with the school, the local authority and the Department for Education.

The school continues to work with St Lawrence CE Primary School. As well as the Year 5 play leader training given, it is providing useful support for the two newly qualified teachers.