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Mrs E Viner
The Headteacher
Denmead Junior School
Bere Road
Waterlooville
PO7 6PH

Dear Mrs Viner

Special measures monitoring inspection of Denmead Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 29 April 2015, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other members of staff, four members of the governing body, including the Chair, and two representatives of the local authority. You and I toured the school together, briefly observing all classes at work. I evaluated documents, including the school improvement plan, the local authority's action plan and minutes of meetings.

Context

Since the inspection, you have appointed a new deputy headteacher. The governing body has been reconstituted and reduced in size. It has many new members, including the Chair. The school is no longer in formal federation with the nearby infant school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The school has begun to improve quickly since the inspection. As headteacher, you lead well. Your experience of leading another school through special measures in the

past is valuable. Rightly, you balance carefully the need for swift improvement with ensuring the changes are sustainable. You also balance support and challenge very well. As a result, members of staff understand and accept the changes being pursued. Their expectations are clearly higher. Staff training and development are thoughtfully structured and considered.

The deputy headteacher has a suitable portfolio of management duties, including responsibility for inclusion and managing the work of the special educational needs coordinator. She is pleased with the external coaching she receives. She speaks with passion about her responsibilities and explains her work and its impact clearly. For example, she has changed, for the better, the ways in which pupils entitled to the pupil premium are served and their needs met. There is some evidence of improvements in the outcomes for these pupils, but it is a mixed picture.

The roles of some other key leaders are being developed well. The leader for English has identified clear subject priorities, which include providing staff with a curriculum framework. However, the roles of subject leaders beyond English and mathematics are underdeveloped. This means that, as you have identified, pupils do not yet receive a rich and broad curriculum. Positively, a link with a school in Mexico is being usefully developed.

Performance management for staff is appropriately organised. So are regular progress meetings in which members of staff regularly discuss and check how well each pupil is learning. These discussions provide increased responsibility and accountability for class teachers and year group leaders. Using the well-organised data available, you expect better results at Year 6 this year.

Our visits to classrooms, together with your own reports and evaluations, indicate clearly that the school is already different and better. In all 12 classes, pupils were suitably engaged in worthwhile learning tasks. They contributed sensibly to discussions, as appropriate. Their behaviour was usually positive and well focused. The classrooms themselves were all interesting and stimulating for pupils. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils' writing was at a lower standard than should be expected, although improving. The writing I saw in Year 3 pupils' books was of a better standard for their age. The quality of pupils' handwriting across the school was mixed, with considerable inconsistencies of style. However, pupils often set out their work neatly. There are some improvements in marking and opportunities for pupils to respond to marking comments.

The school improvement plan is a well-organised and useful document. It is having an impact. You keep reliable evidence of emerging progress against the relevant targets. Many of these targets are well written, but some lack sharpness and many could be usefully related to outcomes for pupils.

At this very early stage after its reorganisation, the governing body is developing its work well. It is purposefully led by the Chair. The review of governance, recommended in the inspection, was promptly carried out. The recommendations are being effectively implemented. Governors are realistic about the school's weaknesses. Each of them has well-considered, individual responsibilities. Governors' visits to the school are carefully linked to aspects of the school improvement plan. This helps sustain the school's firm focus on improvement. Governors are undertaking useful and suitably planned training. Their questions of senior staff are becoming more robust and perceptive. However, these questions could usefully focus more frequently on outcomes for pupils.

The local authority supports well. Its evaluations of the school are accurate and robust. There is helpful demarcation between the roles of officers who support the school and those who evaluate its progress. This ensures independence and rigour. The local authority's action plan is clearly written and well linked to the work of the school. Local authority officers work closely with you, leading to a fully understood agenda for improvement.

At my next monitoring inspection, I expect to consider particularly how well all pupils are set challenging work, and the extent to which this is leading to faster progress. I will look in more detail at how well pupils are achieving. I will evaluate how well leaders, at all levels, are contributing. I will check pupils' behaviour and their views.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector