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Mrs J Zadeh
Interim Headteacher
Jarvis Brook Primary School
Hadlow Down Road
Crowborough
East Sussex
TN6 3RG

Dear Mrs Zadeh

Special measures monitoring inspection of Jarvis Brook Primary School

Following my visit with John Viner, Additional inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 May 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2014. 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 one newly qualified teacher 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 East Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2014

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, including in the early years, and boost achievement by ensuring that:
 - every effort is made to recruit high-quality, permanent teaching staff
 - inadequate teaching is eradicated
 - all teachers have consistently high expectations, both for the standards attained by pupils of all abilities and the progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics
 - the most able pupils are challenged with appropriately demanding work to enable them to make rapid progress
 - teachers plan activities that take full account of what pupils already know and focus on sustaining pupils' concentration and involvement in their learning
 - pupils' behaviour does not slip during lessons
 - teachers give clear explanations to pupils so they are clear about the purpose of their learning and understand what they need to do
 - teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is more consistent, secure and confident.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - there is consistency and rigour in monitoring the work of the school, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching
 - there is robust tracking and monitoring of the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils
 - the school communicates more effectively with parents and carers and rebuilds their confidence in the leadership and management of the school.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 May 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, inclusion manager, a representative from the local authority, a group of middle leaders and a group of pupils. They also spoke to the Chair of the new Interim Executive Board on the telephone. Inspectors reviewed all areas for improvement, with a particular focus on the quality of teaching and learning.

Context

A new Year 1 teacher has started. The governing body was replaced by an interim executive board (IEB) in February 2015. The local authority is exploring options for the school to become part of a hard federation.

Achievement of pupils at the school

While pupils' rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics have continued to improve, there remains a varied picture overall. Some pupils have begun to catch up since January and pupils currently in Year 6 have made rapid progress since September. However, some pupils in other classes in Key Stage 2 have not done as well in certain subjects, such as mathematics and writing.

Work in pupils' books reflects pupils' accelerated learning in English and mathematics. However, in other subjects, pupils' achievement is still too varied. Furthermore, opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are inconsistent. This means pupils are not always getting the best opportunities to apply their skills and deepen their learning across a range of subjects.

The school's information about pupils' progress suggests that they will attain results in line with, or above, national averages in both Key Stages 1 and 2. This represents a significant improvement from the results that were attained by pupils in 2014. However, school leaders have rightly identified that, although making much better progress, pupils' attainment in writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling still needs to improve.

The achievement of different groups of pupils shows similar inconsistencies. In the current Year 5 and 6 classes, more-able pupils are making more rapid progress and look likely to attain the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the school has rightly identified that more work needs to be done to improve the overall achievement of boys at the school in all three key stages.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching continues to improve, although there is still much more to be done. Leaders have successfully reduced the number of classes being taught by temporary staff. For example, the teacher appointed to teach Year 1 has already improved the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are now higher, although there remain some inconsistencies. This is evident in lessons and the work that pupils are now producing in their books, particularly in English and mathematics. Where teachers' expectations are at their highest, pupils are now producing work of a much higher standard. However, at times, teachers still do not expect enough of pupils, particularly in subjects such as history or science.

Teachers' planning continues to improve. Leaders have ensured that there are clearer policies for how key skills in English and mathematics should be taught. For example, the teaching of phonics (the link between letters and their sounds) is already more effective.

Teachers are making much better use of assessment information when planning work for pupils. Where this has been established well, pupils of all abilities now make better progress because their work helps them to build on what they already know or can do. However, some teachers still do not plan work that challenges more-able pupils sufficiently. The work pupils are asked to do in other subjects is not tailored well enough for the needs of pupils of different abilities.

Teachers' marking and feedback are also variable. All staff are using the school's marking policy. However, too often, feedback only makes reference to the objective of the lesson and does not clarify for pupils what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve their learning.

Teachers' explanations in lessons are now much clearer. As a result, pupils know what they are learning about and understand what they have to do and why.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is better. This is because pupils now generally find lessons more interesting, challenging and fun. However, some variability between classes remains. Pupils report that they like the new, simple 'ladders' introduced by the interim headteacher for managing behaviour in class. This effectively enables teachers to reward good behaviour and sanction any poorer behaviour on the rare occasions that this is necessary.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management are stronger. The interim headteacher's passion for doing what is right for the pupils provides clear direction for the staff. This has ensured that senior leaders have built upon the improvements made at the last monitoring visit well. The interim headteacher has rightly identified that she needs to share the responsibility for improving teaching and learning among all leaders to enable more rapid progress.

There is now even more rigour in leaders' monitoring. Leaders use effective systems for tracking the achievement of pupils, to accurately check how individuals and groups of pupils are progressing. The interim headteacher continues to observe teaching and learning in every class and has an accurate view of the quality of teaching. The deputy headteachers now rightly have more opportunity to contribute to the evaluations about the school's progress. The interim headteacher effectively uses the information from leaders' monitoring to ensure the priorities in the school development plan remain the right ones.

Governance has improved significantly since the last monitoring visit. The newly appointed IEB has already ensured that systems for accountability are much tighter to bring about rapid improvement. Minutes from meetings demonstrate that the interim headteacher is now held robustly to account. The IEB provides strong strategic leadership. For example, members are already considering how best to secure the long-term substantive leadership for the school.

Subject leadership remains underdeveloped. The interim headteacher has recently allocated responsibilities for subject leadership. Subject leaders have also received useful training from the local authority. However, they are not yet carrying out the roles and so do not yet make a contribution to improving teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

The leadership and management of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are very effective. The inclusion manager is knowledgeable and ensures that the school responds rapidly to the needs of individual pupils. She leads support staff effectively. This ensures that teaching assistants support teaching and learning effectively in class.

The school now communicates more effectively with parents and carers. As well as the improvements made to the school website and information that is sent home, parents and carers now have a number of opportunities to be more involved in the school. For example, a useful presentation was given to parents and carers about the calculation policy that had been developed at the school.

External support

The local authority provides appropriate and relevant support. Consultants carry out useful work to verify the monitoring undertaken by school leaders. For example, they rightly identified the inconsistency of challenge being provided for more-able pupils. School leaders have made good use of external support provided by a local National Leader of Education (a government programme which utilises the skills of headteachers of outstanding schools), that was brokered by the local authority, for example, acting on the guidance they received to improve pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.