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Mrs Elaine Viner
Headteacher
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Waterlooville
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Dear Mrs Viner

Special measures monitoring inspection of Denmead Junior School

Following my visit (with Brian Macdonald, Ofsted Inspector) to your school on 14–15 October 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 again became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 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 taking effective action 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

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring all pupils are fully challenged through work that is set at the right level for them
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and teachers check their learning during lessons
 - making sure that probing questioning deepens pupils' thinking and, where necessary, tasks are re-shaped quickly to ensure effective learning
 - ensuring that all teachers give pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work and check that pupils follow this.

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - establishing clear, unequivocal expectations for spelling, punctuation and grammar for each year group, that are robustly reinforced
 - setting much higher expectations for pupils' achievement in writing so that more pupils attain a higher level
 - ensuring writing assessments are used to set pupils clear targets for improvement
 - providing purposeful opportunities for pupils to write extensively across subjects
 - improving guided reading sessions by ensuring tasks help pupils develop their key reading skills so that they can then apply these to their independent reading
 - encouraging regular reading at home through effective home-school links that help to foster a love of books
 - making sure that work is pitched at the right level for pupils in mathematics
 - ensuring pupils have regular, purposeful opportunities to develop problem solving and investigative skills in mathematics.

- Build the capacity of leadership and management to drive improvement by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders through training and coaching so that they have greater accountability for accelerating pupils' progress
 - ensuring middle leaders' action plans are clearly linked to measurable improvements in pupils' learning so they know how successful they have been in raising achievement
 - ensuring that individual and whole-school targets for all staff, appropriate to their level of responsibility, are closely related to improvements in pupils'

achievement and robustly implemented.

- Improve behaviour and safety by developing pupils' social skills so that they understand the importance of good behaviour at playtimes.
- 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 second monitoring inspection

Evidence

Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of staff, representatives of the governing body and officers of the local authority. They talked with pupils and heard some pupils from Year 4 read. They observed lessons in all classes, many of them jointly with the headteacher, and scrutinised pupils' work. They observed at playtimes, as pupils moved around the school, and during a singing assembly. They took note of parents' opinions from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They looked at documents, including school improvement plans, minutes of meetings and information about pupils' academic progress.

Context

Since the first monitoring inspection, the school's staffing has remained relatively stable. Some staff have left and others joined at the start of the new academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils' academic progress shows clear improvement. For example, the problems identified at the last monitoring inspection about handwriting and presentation are now of less concern. Pupils now write more neatly. They talk happily about how much better they are doing.

Year 3 pupils have made a positive start. They arrived from the infant school able to concentrate and focus closely on their learning. The junior school has started to build effectively on this. The headteacher and her staff know that, over time, these pupils should achieve very well, if high expectations are sustained.

The results of the 2015 Year 6 national assessments in English and mathematics were broadly in line with national averages. The pupils concerned made better progress than the cohort a year before them. However, too few of them reached the higher levels. Their underachievement in earlier years meant that they did not do as well as they should have done. The current Year 6 has the same problem. These pupils did not make the progress that they should have done in the earlier years and are still catching up. However their progress improved last year and continues this year to improve at a quicker pace. For example, during this monitoring inspection, Year 6 pupils worked sensibly and successfully to develop their understanding of metaphor through the well-chosen James Reeves poem, 'The Sea'. The school has set demanding targets for these pupils. At the next monitoring inspection, their progress will be checked carefully.

The pupils who read to an inspector did so fluently and accurately. They used their knowledge of letter sounds confidently to 'sound out' tricky words like 'engrossed' and 'sprawling'. They explained how they now follow the school's policy of taking books home to read at least five times per week, getting their homework reading record signed by parents. While their technical reading skills are strong, well-developed comprehension skills and sense of enjoyment of their reading are not quite as evident.

Observations in some English lessons across the school reinforced this. Teachers and teaching assistants are adept at ensuring pupils work towards set objectives. For example, in Year 4, across the year group, pupils became increasingly proficient in showing how they could write complex sentences about their recent, much enjoyed, residential visit. However, the pupils were so focused on the technical objective that they found it harder to say whether or why they had enjoyed writing and reading their sentences. They did not see the bigger picture of the learning and missed, in a sense, the wood for the trees. The school, as it develops its curriculum, needs to bear this in mind and ensure pupils can link different aspects of their learning, understanding better why they are doing what they are doing.

Pupils with special educational needs show mixed but improving rates of progress. This is clearly recognised by the new inclusion leader, who is using her considerable expertise to devise new and better approaches to meeting the pupils' varied needs.

The same applies to those pupils entitled to the additional pupil premium funding. There is some improvement in their performance, but this needs to accelerate. Over some years now, the wide gap between the outcomes for these pupils and those nationally has stayed stubbornly the same.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching has markedly improved. The headteacher has introduced consistent systems, across the school, by which teachers plan lessons and set work which is matched at the right level of difficulty to the different needs of pupils. Staff collaborate keenly, showing great commitment. Year group teams work and plan particularly well together. The training and coaching of staff is clearly focused. All of these improvements are beginning to have positive effects on pupils' learning. Lessons are usually thoroughly planned. Teachers give clear explanations and encourage pupils to try their best. Staff have improved their subject knowledge, especially in English and mathematics. The classrooms are interesting and motivating places for the pupils.

Pupils too notice the improvements. Some pointed out the better ways they are now taught to learn their times tables, for example. Parents who responded to the online

questionnaire are mainly positive too. Their views and estimation of the school, including the teaching, have risen.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work is much better. Pupils increasingly make good use of the comments made on their work, to improve it. Verbal feedback by staff, during lessons, is often well focused and useful. Teachers' and teaching assistants' careful questioning of pupils often enables them to think more accurately and address any misconceptions.

In a very successful Year 5 science lesson observed, the teacher ensured that pupils understood clearly how what they had previously learned, and the new tasks in the lesson, linked together. Pupils enjoyed thinking about, and testing for themselves, how condensation forms and why this is important in the water cycle. As they thought of questions of their own, the teacher guided them flexibly and skilfully to find the answer by thinking for themselves. She demonstrated good subject knowledge in doing so. She kept the lesson moving at a fast pace. By the end, all pupils had enjoyed making a small-scale water cycle in a bag, with reliable understanding.

In some other cases, however, there is less flexibility in the way lessons are organised. Sometimes, especially in English and mathematics, teachers stick to the set objectives and plans too rigidly, without much adaptation. Such lessons, although valuable, can lack excitement and their pace may become too slow. The rigidity of the objectives can limit, as well as guide, the learning. The headteacher is aware that, as teaching continues to develop, staff need to build further their confidence in using and adapting the school's new planning systems. She rightly intends to support them in trying out more creative and, sometimes, more ambitious, unscripted ideas.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils enjoy school. Their rate of attendance continues to be good. In lessons, they listen and engage much better than was reported a year ago. They are keen to help each other and take the initiative. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils listened to each other respectfully and, when they were not sure, tried things out sensibly, while working out how to find equivalent fractions. Occasionally, however, pupils' behaviour deteriorates somewhat in lessons when they can become over-excited or the lesson lacks pace or interest; they then stop listening and fidget.

The pupils who met with inspectors said they feel very safe in the school. They understand safety rules and know who to talk to if any problems arise. The parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire raised no serious concerns about behaviour.

Pupils enjoy active playtimes. The school is successfully encouraging better-quality play by arranging games and activities. A 'no contact' rule is helpful in making the playground a pleasant environment. Pupils move around the school, and queue up, sensibly and safely. In the assembly observed, all the pupils concentrated well. They enjoyed their singing, which was controlled and accurate, at times in two parts. Pupils were orderly when entering the hall, though some were noisy when leaving.

Pupils take on useful responsibilities. Some are members of the school council. Others help in various ways; by organising the hall for assemblies, for example. The school has organised some specific activities for pupils whose parents are members of Her Majesty's forces, giving these pupils additional help and support and recognising their special importance.

There have been no exclusions this term and, over time, the rate of exclusion is low.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher leads very effectively. Her vision for the school is clear. Her experience continues to be very valuable. The school has made good progress in the past year.

Management systems are underpinning this improvement effectively. Staff performance management is well organised. The school improvement plan is accurately written. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are correctly organised.

The headteacher is working successfully to develop the skills of the staff and delegating more responsibility to them. She sees the potential in her team. The deputy headteacher continues to work very effectively. Her recent absence through illness has been managed well, to minimise the impact. The subject leaders for English and mathematics are effective and industrious. The headteacher is sensibly broadening the remit of inclusion leader, who is taking up some of the deputy headteacher's work so that the deputy headteacher can now assume responsibility for assessment. This is especially important as the school moves to a different system for recording pupils' progress.

Leaders of subjects, beyond English and mathematics, are starting to develop their roles. There is, however, much more to do. Classes spend too much time on English and mathematics, without sufficient breadth. At the time of the monitoring inspection, some classes did nothing but these subjects all day. The curriculum is not extensive enough and pupils do not receive all of the rich experiences that they should. There are, however, some positive features. These include residential visits and other visits such as those made by classes to London and Stonehenge. There are some interesting history topics. Pupils learn Spanish, due to an exciting link with a school in Mexico. Some pupils enjoyed sewing during the monitoring inspection.

But these positive features are not yet part of a coherent, rigorous, broad and balanced curriculum, in which each subject's special features are fully embedded and sustained.

The governing body is astute and well organised. Its members have complementary skills and take part in useful and relevant training, well tailored to their needs. Governors understand their roles very well. They ask pertinent questions of senior staff to hold them to account. Occasionally, these questions could go deeper in checking impact and quality; monitoring effectively how thoroughly things have been undertaken. Governors know the school well. They can see the improvements clearly but are also aware of areas for further improvement. For example, they know the school needs to ensure that pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding achieve more.

External support

The local authority works very well with the school. It has continued to ensure that its advice, on the one hand, and its work in reviewing the school's work, on the other, are kept separate. This helps ensure that its evaluation of the school is robust and accurate. Its consultants and inspectors work closely with staff to bring the improvements which are evident. Their work is carefully targeted and efficient. However, the local authority has not yet provided support to the school in any subjects beyond English and mathematics. It recognises the need to do so.

Priority for further improvement

Allocate an appropriate amount of time for the teaching of each curriculum subject. Ensure this broader curriculum is followed in all classes. Improve the content and rigour of each subject through the continuing development of all curriculum subject leaders.