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26 November 2008

Mrs June Kershaw
Headteacher
Woodcot Primary School
Tukes Avenue
Bridgemary
Gosport
PO13 0SG

Dear Mrs Kershaw

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Woodcot Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 and 19 November 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

John Seal
H M Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Woodcot Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 November 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with pupils, staff, the headteacher, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

There have been some further changes to staffing and the organisation of teaching groups. In September a new full-time teacher for the Year 1 class and a part-time special needs coordinator (SENCO) were appointed. The substantive SENCO is currently on maternity leave. All classes are distinct year groups whereas in previous years some year groups were mixed within the same classes. The governing body has two new members.

Achievement and standards

The results of the 2008 Key Stage 1 national assessments have improved overall to be broadly in line with national expectations. Reading and writing are broadly in line with the national average. However, mathematics was below average and remains a school priority.

The school's evaluation of the unvalidated Key Stage 2 results in English, mathematics and science indicates that although results overall were below average, there have been improvements in mathematics and science. However, the proportion of pupils reaching national expected standards in English fell.

The school now has an accurate picture of the standards and rates of progress of all pupils. In addition to the school's own data, work seen in classes indicates that there is a higher proportion of pupils who are now working at standards that are generally in line with national expectations in every year group. This is because more pupils are making satisfactory progress or better. However, there are still too many pupils whose progress is not fast enough and whose attainment is below average. Standards and progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and in care is now known to be at least satisfactory. As a consequence, the school's provision is better matched to these pupils' needs.

Personal development and well-being

The behaviour of pupils around the school and in lessons is consistently good. They are very positive about their learning, work well together and their attendance is good. Pupils' economic well-being continues to improve because of the school's continued focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved and there has been a significant increase in the proportion of good teaching across the school. Although this stronger profile of teaching is promising, it has not yet been in place long enough to improve standards and progress sufficiently. The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is a particular strength. Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan well to provide learning activities which match individual pupils' needs. They use information about pupils' prior attainment effectively to provide challenge and support for all pupils. Younger pupils in particular can reflect on their learning and are able to identify the next steps towards their individual targets. They are also developing good independent learning skills. Teaching assistants are well deployed and work closely with teachers and pupils to meet the clear learning objectives.

Where teaching is less effective, introductions and explanations are too lengthy, as a result of which pupils lose enthusiasm, their levels of interest decline and their rate of progress diminishes. Teachers sometimes adhere too closely to their planning for large groups. As a result, individual pupils are not always challenged to make as much progress as they could and there are missed opportunities for spontaneous responses to pupils' creative contributions.

The school has now effectively tracked all pupils' current standards and their rates of progress towards specific and appropriately challenging targets. Pupils have personalised target information in their work, and are aware of their current levels of performance. In many cases this helps them to have a clear idea of how to improve. The targets are used to inform teachers' marking and feedback. Where this is effective, pupils' progress is clearer and any underachievement is responded to earlier with effective intervention strategies.

The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils very well. There are well-planned and structured activities which provide broad, balanced and relevant learning experiences. The best of these are practical and relate to pupils' experiences.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is developing well. The recently appointed SENCO has effectively identified all those pupils who are in need of specialist and specific support. There are appropriate strategies in place to ensure that most of the support is provided within the context of lessons.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and her leadership team have worked hard to bring about significant and effective changes to the school's ethos and performance. There is now a whole-school approach to improving outcomes for all pupils. The improvement in the quality of teaching has come about because of the headteacher's single-minded approach to ensuring good quality provision for all pupils. Lessons and pupils' progress are regularly monitored and evaluated and, as a

result, the leadership team now has a clear understanding of the progress the school has made and the actions needed to improve even further. Effective contributions are made by members of the leadership team in the evaluation of the school's performance, particularly in relation to standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science. Although teaching is regularly monitored by all key leaders, the records kept are not sufficiently formal and therefore do not provide clear information about the rate of progress pupils make in lessons and what teachers need to do specifically to improve it.

The governing body is now functioning effectively. It is businesslike, purposeful and well focused on raising standards for all pupils in conjunction with the headteacher, leadership team and local authority.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the pupils' achievement, particularly in English and mathematics, by raising teachers' expectations – satisfactory
- improve the use of tracking and assessment to set more challenging work – satisfactory
- improve the quality and rigour of monitoring and evaluation at all levels so that improvement is more rapid and sustained – satisfactory
- ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly in English and mathematics – satisfactory

External support

The support for the school from the local authority has been effective in supporting the school's improvement. The district manager has a clear understanding of what the school's needs are and provides appropriate challenge in addition to coordinating the support of a mathematics consultant, the English Inspector and an advisory headteacher.

The school has benefited from some effective support from the local authority's governor services which have worked closely with the governing body which has made rapid improvements to a point where the school receives appropriate challenge and support.

Priority for further improvement

- Ensure that there is a clear and unremitting whole-school focus to improve the rate of progress of all pupils, which includes:
 - all teaching focusing explicitly on a faster pace of learning within lessons
 - all monitoring and evaluation of lessons focusing on outcomes for pupils.