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2 April 2009

Mrs Lynne Smith  
Acting Headteacher  
Winklebury Junior School  
Willoughby Way  
Basingstoke  
RG23 8AF

Dear Mrs Smith

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Winklebury Junior School

Following my visit with Juliet Ward, Additional Inspector, to your school on 25 and 26 March 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker  
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Winklebury Junior School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 March 2009

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work; scrutinised documents; and met with the acting headteacher, leadership consultants, the senior management team, pupils, representatives of the governing body and representatives from the local authority. Lessons were observed in all classes.

## Context

The consultant headteacher is currently acting headteacher for four days each week. She took over the leadership of the school two weeks before the monitoring visit. She is supported by a leadership consultant. The deputy headteacher is phasing in her return to work following a long absence due to illness. At the time of the visit there was a supply teacher in a Year 5 class and a teacher on a fixed term contract in a Year 6 class.

## Achievement and standards

There are signs of improving progress in Years 3 and 4 and notably in Year 6. Although progress is still not rapid enough to help pupils to overcome earlier underachievement, there are now more lessons where pupils are making good progress. In stark contrast, progress in Year 5 is wholly inadequate and underachievement remains widespread. There has been no discernible improvement in the progress being made by the pupils in Year 5.

A scrutiny of the pupils' exercise books confirms that considerable variation remains between the generally poor quality and quantity of work in Year 5 and the greater volume of work in Years 3 and 4 and the greater consistency and challenge in the work of pupils in both classes in Year 6.

The contrast between the rapid progress seen in a Year 6 science lesson and the very slow progress in a Year 5 mathematics lesson encapsulates the situation in the school. Where the pupils are very well managed and challenged through tasks that are carefully matched to their needs, they enjoy learning. Where the teaching lacks clarity the pupils become bored, their behaviour deteriorates and their learning suffers. Although there is an increase in the proportion of good lessons, there are still not enough to ensure the pupils reach the standards they should. Although confined to one year group, inadequate learning and progress in lessons has not reduced.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science – inadequate

## Personal development and well-being

Behaviour has improved. General movement of pupils in and out of lessons is more orderly. In assembly the pupils show respect and listen attentively and this is being successfully transferred to generate an ethos that is beginning to promote greater purpose throughout the school as a whole. However, in Year 5, where teaching lacks direction and challenge, the pupils soon become restless and chatter, and inattention hampers progress. In other year groups there is growing cooperation in lessons and in Year 6 pupils are now demonstrating the ability to collaborate successfully when tackling challenging tasks.

The school no longer sells crisps and chocolate through the tuck shop. This recent move towards establishing a greater understanding of the need for a healthy diet has yet to increase the awareness of many pupils. Attendance is falling. It is below average and steps are needed to halt this slide.

## Quality of provision

The contrast between the strongest and the weakest teaching is stark. The weakest teaching is not improving and, consequently, the underachievement of pupils in Year 5 is increasing rather than being reduced. In other year groups progress is increasing as a result of more good and occasionally outstanding lessons. There have been improvements to lesson planning, although the implementation of these plans remains inconsistent. The use of ability sets is resulting in more lessons where work is appropriately matched to the pupils' needs but, within these groups, there is still a range of ability which is rarely catered for through tasks that are modified for individuals and groups. The training, deployment and briefing of learning support assistants is not sufficient for them to play a full role in lessons. Too often this valuable resource is peripheral rather than central to the learning of groups and individuals.

Where progress is improving it is because assessment and target setting are more rigorous. There is now an effective system of tracking pupils' progress. This is providing a very clear picture of those pupils who are making satisfactory progress and those who are not. This information is also providing a basis for better lesson planning which ensures tasks are, in broad terms, matched to the needs of the pupils. However, the system is not consistent or incisive enough to support the planning for the needs of groups and individuals. Targets are being used to good effect in some classes while in others they are not being used effectively either to motivate pupils or to focus their learning.

Moves to generate greater breadth and a better balance to the curriculum are proving successful in some classes. At its best, the curriculum in practice is interesting, exciting and enjoyable. At its worst, it is dull and does little to stimulate learning. The coverage of English, mathematics and science is increasing because of greater consistency of approach to planning. However, gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills sometimes undermine the teachers' efforts to provide challenging



activities. This was the case in a well-prepared Year 4 science lesson where the pupils' limited investigative skills restricted their progress in a potentially good lesson.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- make better use of assessment to accelerate the progress made by pupils  
– satisfactory

### Leadership and management

In her very short time in charge, the acting headteacher has empowered the senior leadership team to tackle the many inconsistencies and weaknesses within the school. The senior leaders now have clear direction and are in the process of establishing the procedures, processes and systems that are needed to provide the firm foundation for future improvement. However, their own analysis shows the considerable range of improvements that are needed and they have yet to make any inroads into the continuing underachievement in Year 5.

The acting headteacher and the leadership consultant have quickly identified where changes and improvements are needed. They have begun the processes of establishing greater consistency in the quality of teaching and have already succeeded in bringing improvement to behaviour.

The local authority has successfully increased its representation on the governing body to five and, consequently, strengthened governance. The governing body now has a wealth of experience to draw upon. The minutes of the most recent governing body meeting show how robustly they are holding the school to account. They are now strengthening their policies and procedures to ensure all statutory requirements are met in full. In addition, they are working with the acting headteacher to clarify the financial position of the school and the contracts and the agreements made with all members of staff.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels so that they make their full contribution to raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching and learning – inadequate
- strengthen governance, particularly in monitoring the school's performance more systematically, so that governors can hold it to account  
– satisfactory

### External support

The local authority has taken appropriate steps to make sure the school has the leadership it needs in the short term. The deployment of leadership consultants and consultants to improve teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is a renewed optimism, in both the school and the local authority, that the consultants' advice and

guidance will be implemented with greater consistency and, consequently, have greater impact.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure the learning support assistants are fully trained, briefed and effectively deployed to play a central role in accelerating the progress made by groups and individual pupils.
- Take steps to reverse the downward trend in attendance.