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7 December 2009

Mrs Kate Webb
Acting Headteacher
Winklebury Junior School
Willoughby Way
Basingstoke
RG23 8AF

Dear Mrs Webb

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Winklebury Junior School

Following my visit on 3 and 4 December, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth 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 – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

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's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Parker", written in a cursive style.

Christopher Parker
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Winklebury Junior School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 December 2009

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with a group of pupils, the acting headteacher, leadership consultants, middle leaders, representatives of the local authority, and three members of the federated governing body.

Context

A new governing body for the federated infant and junior school is now in place. The governors were unable to appoint a headteacher for the federation. Temporary leadership arrangements will continue in the Junior School until a suitable candidate is appointed.

Currently, three classes are taught by temporary teachers. In Year 6, the phase leader is teaching English and mathematics in both classes.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Progress is accelerating in all year groups. Although some variation in the progress made by pupils remains, most pupils are making much better progress than in the recent past. The school's extensive analysis of the progress made by all of the groups represented in the school shows that, in most year groups, pupils have made as much progress in the first 10 weeks of this term as they did in the whole of last year. This is because the leadership team has now established high expectations and robust systems for checking that pupils are making at least the expected amount of progress. The raising attainment plan has focused on improving inference and deduction in reading and, as a result, there has been marked surge in progress. The longer-term focus on writing is also bringing increased progress, and the pupils are demonstrating greater confidence in lessons where they talk about how they will approach writing tasks. The teachers are providing interesting drama and role-play opportunities, which have added considerable enjoyment for the pupils. The rate of increase in progress in mathematics is not quite as marked, because pupils are not able to use and apply their skills with the same degree of confidence. Nevertheless, some teachers are now setting new mathematical learning in the context of everyday problems.

The increased rate of progress and the improving attainment are evident in lessons and in the pupils' work in their exercise books.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

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

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Attitudes to learning and pupils' enjoyment are improving. The pupils in Year 6 responded particularly well to an interesting and challenging sequence of lessons about *Macbeth*. The teacher's imaginative use of text, film and drama motivated and engaged pupils to the extent that conversations about their work continued in the corridor after the lesson had ended. Most pupils behave well and lessons proceed with few interruptions but, in discussion, pupils feel that in some classes there are still one or two of their peers who do not behave well enough and cause disruption from time to time.

Teachers make good use of opportunities in lessons to allow the pupils to reflect on their own behaviour and that of others. For example, in an English lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher used a play script about an evacuee who was being bullied to explore the feelings of all concerned with the incident. A similar theme was developed in a lower-school assembly. This illustrates well the coordinated and unrelenting approach of the whole staff to establishing a culture of respect. There are clear signs that this is paying dividends. For example, most pupils are polite and respectful of each other and adults as they move around the school.

The effectiveness of provision

The profile of the quality of teaching has been consolidated since the last monitoring visit. All of the lessons seen on this visit were satisfactory, and half were good or outstanding. Members of the permanent teaching staff continue to develop and improve their practice. They, and their pupils, are benefiting considerably from the support and improved structures within the school. They share the leadership team's heightened expectations of what the pupils can achieve.

Changes to the teaching staff continue to present a challenge for the leadership team. Some temporary teachers take time to adjust to the expectation that only good progress in every lesson will eradicate the underachievement of the recent past. The phase leaders are providing strong role models for their colleagues, and now share and promote high expectation of consistently good teaching and learning.

In Year 6, the phase leader's very effective skills are currently being used to teach English and mathematics in both classes. This is making sure that pupils make good progress in both classes but, in discussion, some pupils say they find the arrangement unsettling.

In most lessons, the match of work to the needs of different groups of pupils is good and makes effective use of the wide range of information about their previous

attainment. However, there are still occasions where the teacher is not rigorous enough in checking that all pupils fully understand the task they have been set and are making good progress towards their targets.

The tracking of the progress made by groups and individuals is now well established. Linked to meetings about pupils' progress, improved target setting and more sharply focused marking, assessment is now being used to much greater effect to accelerate pupils' progress. Pupils know what their targets are and are keen to achieve them, and teachers are becoming adept at identifying evidence to support judgements in line with the requirements of the national system for assessing pupils' progress.

The school is making effective use of external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Appropriate steps are being taken to help a small number of pupils to remove the barriers to learning which they face.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher and the leadership team have continued to drive the school forward with great determination. They have built successfully and rapidly on the initial improvement that they achieved when they first took over the leadership of the school. Their detailed analysis of each pupil's progress and relentless pursuit of improved teaching and assessment underpin the accelerating progress now being made by the pupils. They are equally rigorous in their approach to improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

The leadership team has suffered some setbacks as a result of changes in temporary teaching staff, but they are not afraid to make changes and take difficult decisions to bring about long-term benefits for the pupils.

The deputy headteacher and phase leaders are now playing a far more effective role in the leadership of the school. The acting headteacher has devolved important responsibilities to them and, with valuable guidance from the local authority, they are now monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through rigorous scrutiny of the pupils' work. They have taken steps which have resulted in much improved marking and target setting, which in turn are promoting better progress for the pupils. These developments strengthen the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

The federated governing body is now in place and, following elections, has a good level of parental representation. This, and the fact that the additional governors appointed by the local authority have now assumed an advisory role rather than a leading one, is indicative of the much stronger governance which is now supporting

the school. The new chair of governors has clear plans for ongoing training so that all members of the governing body can rigorously analyse and challenge the school's performance.

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 – good
- strengthen governance, particularly in monitoring the school's performance more systematically, so that governors can hold it to account – good

External support

The local authority has continued to provide strong support for the school, which is greatly appreciated by the leadership team and governors. Support for phase and subject leaders has been particularly effective, and the challenges made by consultants at progress meetings have added to the rigour and pursuit of consistently good progress.

The local authority's comprehensive monitoring of the school's performance continues to provide a frequent and accurate measure of the progress being made towards the targets set in the inspection of June 2008.

Priorities for further improvement

- Extend the range of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills.