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10 May 2010

Mrs Rachael Thomas  
The Headteacher  
Filton Avenue Junior School  
Lockleaze Road  
Horfield  
Bristol  
BS7 9RP

Dear Mrs Thomas

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Filton Avenue Junior School

Following my visit with Martin James, additional inspector, to your school on 29 and 30 April 2010, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

One newly qualified teacher may 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 the governing body and the Director of Children's Services for Bristol.

Yours sincerely

Susan Kara  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Filton Avenue Junior School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 29 and 30 April 2010

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, three representatives from the governing body, the local authority School Improvement Officer (who is also the School Improvement Partner) and a range of staff.

## Context

As part of the local authority support plan, the school is now working in a formal partnership with the adjoining infant school.

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

Since the November 2009 inspection, with the exception of reading in Year 4, the school's detailed data illustrate pupils' achievements are improving in all year groups, in writing, reading and mathematics. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in lessons. The challenge for the staff is to close the gap between the school's attainment at the end of Year 6 and the nationally expected levels of attainment.

## Other relevant pupil outcomes

Attendance has improved and for the first time in many years, attendance was over 94% for Term 4 (the latter half of the spring term).

## The effectiveness of provision

The majority of lessons observed during this monitoring inspection were numeracy lessons, in half of the lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning was good and in half they were satisfactory. Improvements since the previous inspection include:

- greater use of 'talking partners'
- more teacher direction for pupils on the levels of challenge they should attempt when working more independently
- better coverage of numeracy topics.

Inconsistency in the lesson planning and in the style of delivery of the lessons remains. For example, although teaching assistants mostly work effectively to support individuals and small groups of pupils, their deployment rarely featured in the lesson plans.



The literacy and numeracy leaders understand their role. A professional development day for staff about mathematics has helped to address some of the issues concerning insufficient mathematical knowledge. At the time of the inspection the literacy leader was working in partnership with staff from the adjoining infants' school, including their headteacher. They were reclassifying the library books in the same way that the infants' school classify theirs, so that pupils can be readily directed to the right level of book to provide them with challenge.

The teachers' understanding of the significance of the pupil-tracking data, now used by the school, is much improved. Staff are responsible for assessing the level of the pupils' work and recording the progress of the pupils in their class, on the central tracking system. They have yet to use it fully in lesson-planning, to match work to the individual needs of each pupil.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics – satisfactory
- improve assessment procedures so that teachers can take effective responsibility for the progress of pupils in their care – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The senior leaders took too long to get started on tackling the issues raised by the inspection in November 2009. However, since the review, led by the local authority, in March 2010, there has been a significant change in their acceptance of what needs to be done. The senior leadership team now understands that the school has to improve, it understands what has to be done and, in particular, that the emphasis of their focus must be on the quality of learning rather than teaching. It is not yet clear that the senior leadership team is able to secure the necessary improvement. Strategic planning remains weak; plans are not sharply enough focused on raising standards and accelerating progress. There are no clear quantitative targets by which the whole school community can check if they are making fast enough progress.

While the governing body has a number of governors with the skills needed to both support and challenge the school, the committee structure is not well suited to helping the school move quickly out of special measures. At the time of the inspection a new Chair was about to be elected, so the necessary changes to the way the governing body works will be made, once the post is filled. The local authority has planned appropriate support once the election outcome is known.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- accelerate the pace of school improvement – satisfactory.



## External support

The local authority has revised its action plan and it is now satisfactory. The impact of the recent review has been very significant. Although it came a little late in to help the school to plan for rapid improvement it has nevertheless helped them to see a clear way forward both strategically and in their day-to-day planning.