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Mr Andrew Olive
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Olive

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Paulsgrove Primary School

Following my visit with Bill James, Additional Inspector, to your school on 12 and 13 October 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. 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 if mentored by a member of the senior leadership team.

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 Interim Executive Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Portsmouth.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- Raise achievement by:
 - lifting attainment and improving progress in all key stages in reading, writing and mathematics by July 2011
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who reach and exceed the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages
 - improving children's attainment and progress in all areas of learning in the Reception and enhancing resources and learning through play.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - as a matter of urgency, eliminating all the unsatisfactory teaching and ensuring the majority of lessons are good
 - providing a curriculum which clearly sets out the steps for teaching the basic skills and implement robust systems for teaching reading and writing skills
 - ensuring all work is carefully matched to all pupils' capabilities and builds on their existing skills
 - providing individual educational plans which show precise steps in literacy and numeracy for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by September 2010.
- Promote pupils' achievement and personal progress by:
 - significantly reducing exclusions and incidents of poor behaviour, by December 2010
 - significantly improving pupils' attendance through working closely with families so they recognise the impact of poor attendance on pupils' progress, by July 2011
 - increasing intervention programmes to help pupils catch up.
- Ensure leaders and managers gain the confidence of the school community and drive improvement by:
 - revising management structures and systems so roles and responsibilities are clear and leaders and managers at all levels are more accountable for the school's performance, by September 2010
 - rigorously monitoring and evaluating the impact of provision on pupils' progress, particularly teaching and the curriculum, and taking swift action to bring about improvement
 - ensuring staff are empowered to lead and develop the areas for which they are responsible.

Special measures: monitoring of Paulsgrove Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 12 and 13 October 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and school data. The team held meetings with the headteacher and senior staff. The lead inspector met with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector talked to parents and carers. The inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons jointly with senior leaders.

Context

There are changes in staffing across the school. Three teachers new to the school have joined the senior management team. One senior teacher leads Years 3 and 4, the other leads Years 5 and 6. The third senior teacher leads Key Stage 1. The deputy headteacher is non-class based and responsible for behaviour and the curriculum. One further teacher has recently resigned.

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

The performance of pupils in English and mathematics remains variable. Whilst still low, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics is beginning to lift. Progress in reading and mathematics is improving in Key Stage 2. School data show that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well, from low starting points. Attainment at the end of the Reception Year in communication, language and literacy, and in personal, social and emotional development, is in line with national expectations. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is variable across the school. Some pupils achieve well from their different starting points but a significant number underachieve. Attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved. However, school data show that a number of pupils make inadequate progress.

Most pupils enjoy their learning. In a mixed-aged Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge of working out degrees of angles. Pupils report that they are more confident in their work and, as a result, attempt harder challenges with enthusiasm. In a mixed-aged Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson, pupils worked well together to evaluate their work against a set of criteria, such as looking for a good introduction and conclusion to a piece of writing. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to improve how they apply their literacy in lessons. They are more confident in reading, particularly in reading aloud. Pupils report that they read regularly and enjoy a range

of books. Parents and carers report that they are pleased with their children's progress in reading.

The scrutiny of literacy and numeracy books shows an improvement in the quality of work. However, the standard of pupils' writing remains low.

In Key Stage 2, pupils talk about their targets and how to improve their work. Older pupils know the levels they should be aiming for in literacy and mathematics at the end of Year 6. They say they feel more confident in reaching their targets and approaching the next stage in their education when they transfer to secondary school. Some pupils in Year 2 can assess how well they are doing against their targets. However, this is not consistent throughout Key Stage 1, so that too many pupils are unclear how to improve their work. Consequently, they make limited progress.

The successes since the last monitoring visit include improving attendance, pupils' increased enjoyment of school and the positive way in which they now see themselves as learners. However, the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 is not improving at the same rate as the rest of the school.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise pupils' achievement – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour for most pupils is good. School data show a significant drop in incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils report that behaviour around the school is better. Incidents of poor behaviour in lessons are fewer. Staff generally have high expectations of behaviour and respond quickly to isolated incidents. Parents and carers are positive about the school's approach to behaviour. They say the school quickly involves them in helping their child to behave well in school.

The school has reviewed the number of intervention programmes to help pupils catch up to where they should be. There is generally better identification of pupils' needs and match of intervention. Targets in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities support their skills in literacy and mathematics. In Key Stage 2, these plans are more clearly linked to teachers' planning for the whole class. Phase leaders in Key Stage 2 regularly monitor the effectiveness of the interventions in improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There are signs that this has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Occasionally, a small minority of pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English do not make the progress of which they are capable, because the support they receive may not always match their abilities. In Key Stage 1, pupils continue to underachieve because

the effectiveness of individual plans in improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is not consistently monitored by some teachers.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the areas for improvement:

- promote pupils' achievement and personal progress – satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching and learning has generally improved. Teachers' good subject knowledge means that lessons are generally well planned, with steps which challenge pupils to continually improve their basic skills in English and mathematics. In the most effective lessons, teachers set tasks which build on pupils' confidence and improve their learning. In a very effective nursery session, which focused on early literacy skills, the teacher and adults expertly supported children's speaking and listening skills. As a result, children made good progress so that by the end of the session, all youngsters were confidently joining in. The most effective lessons are underpinned by good relationships. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour from pupils so that everyone is busily learning throughout the lesson. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They report that older pupils comment on how much they are enjoying lessons.

Teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 has not improved as quickly as in the rest of the school. Where teaching is effective, tasks are appropriately planned to match the needs of the pupils and teachers have clear expectations of behaviour. This is not the case in all classes. Staffing difficulties have hindered the development of teaching in Key Stage 1 so that some inadequate teaching remains.

The curriculum has improved since the last monitoring visit. The work through topics, such as focusing on the Second World War, is proving popular with pupils. Most teachers' planning ensures that pupils are challenged to apply their reading and writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils report that the increase in wider opportunities through after-school clubs is much appreciated and take-up is good. The Early Years Foundation Stage enhances its curriculum by using the local area as a resource for learning. Visits to the local shops develop early language skills by extending children's vocabulary. The effectiveness of the curriculum in building on pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy has been generally less in Key Stage 1.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The revised management structure since the last monitoring visit has supported the leadership drive for improvement. The newly established senior leadership team has a positive impact on raising expectations of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. Phase leaders model high expectations of teaching and learning. They support colleagues, which leads to improving the school's performance. This is evident in the better progress made by pupils in lessons. The action taken by leaders to improve teaching and learning has successfully brought about better standards of teaching in most of the school. The majority of lessons in Key Stage 2 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now good, and some are outstanding. This is not the case in Key Stage 1.

There are continued improvements to the monitoring of interventions and individual education plans for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities. This has been successful in Key Stage 2. The work of supporting children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who may be vulnerable and at risk of falling behind in early literacy and numeracy is leading to improvements in children's achievement. However, plans have not always been quickly monitored as pupils enter Key Stage 1. Whilst there have been improvements in pupils' progress in reading, the leadership of literacy across the school has had limited impact on raising standards in writing.

The interim executive governing body and leaders and managers regularly monitor the schools' progress against actions in the Raising Achievement Plan. Actions taken have generally raised the quality of teaching and learning. School leaders have an accurate understanding of where weaknesses remain and have identified that the leadership of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is ineffective. The interim executive governing body is aware of its responsibility in supporting a new governing body. There is a timescale and plans in place to achieve this.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure leaders and managers gain confidence of the school community and drive improvement forward – satisfactory

External support

The school is well supported by the local authority Education Improvement Officer who challenges the school in lifting the attainment and progress of all pupils.