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Miss Faye Bertham and Mrs Jan Isaac
The Seconded Partner Headteachers
Stanbridge Primary School
Stanbridge Road
Bristol
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Dear Miss Bertham and Mrs Isaac

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Stanbridge Primary School

Following my visit with Claire Thompson, Additional Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 July 2012, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2011. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed in each key stage 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for South Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2011

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by:
 - taking account of pupils' prior learning when planning and delivering lessons, in order to ensure work is challenging
 - providing lessons that engage and motivate pupils at all times so that their behaviour in lessons is consistently good
 - providing opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively together and take increasing responsibility for their learning
 - ensuring that pupils acquire a better understanding of the progress they are making in their work and what they need to do to improve
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to reflect and to comment on the marked work in their books.
- Improve systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers have sharply measurable targets for tracking the progress of all groups of pupils in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum
 - improving pupils' basic and wider skills throughout the curriculum.
- Improve leadership by:
 - ensuring the governing body receives and acts on timely and accurate information about the performance of the school
 - equipping governors and senior and middle leaders with skills that will enable them to challenge, support and fulfil their roles with greater effect
 - ensuring governors and senior and middle leaders play a more proactive role in developing and shaping the strategic direction of the school.

Special measures: monitoring of Stanbridge Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 11 and 12 July 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the seconded partner headteachers and staff, members of the governing body and the local authority senior primary adviser. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work. The lead inspector spoke to parents and carers. The team observed 13 lessons, most of which were jointly carried out with the partner headteachers. The team looked at teachers' marking and pupils' work in pupils' English and mathematics books. The lead inspector analysed school data relating to pupils' progress and attainment with members of the senior leadership team.

Context

The two headteachers, seconded from the local authority, continue to lead the school. One partner headteacher takes over as substantive headteacher from September 2012. The other partner headteacher will continue to support the school on a part-time basis until December 2012. Leadership and responsibility posts have been restructured. The assistant headteacher has been appointed as deputy headteacher from September 2012. Two teachers are currently out of school on long term sick leave. Their classes are being covered by temporary appointments.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics continue to rise. 2012 national curriculum test results show that the performance of pupils in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved. School tracking data show that pupils in Year 6 have made accelerated progress and so the gaps between their performance and the performance of pupils nationally are closing. In Key Stage 1 the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics continues to improve. Across the school pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is now generally in line, and in some cases above expectations, in most year groups. Attainment is now broadly average.

Since the last monitoring visit improvements in the quality of learning in lessons have continued. For example, in effective English and mathematics lessons in Year 6 pupils produced work of a high quality because targets set for them were challenging. This explains why pupils have made accelerated progress during the year to catch up to where they need to be. In English higher achieving pupils confidently talk about improving their written work by using examples of personification. In mathematics National Curriculum tests for 2012 the school exceeded the targets set for higher achieving pupils. In a lesson on translating shapes more able pupils applied their prior learning, worked independently, showed

a clear understanding of their progress throughout the task and produced high quality work.

Pupils demonstrate how well they can apply their skills across the curriculum. In effective information and communication technology lesson pupils carefully read and interpreted instructions to make complex circuits in order to operate a traffic light system. Added to this, pupils talked about the progress they were making in creating the circuit. Some pupils came to a point in the lesson which was challenging, such as linking the start to the main stem of the circuit. However, pupils confidently solved the problem by talking to the teacher about their on-going progress.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage some children confidently write on their own, read their work and recognise mistakes in spelling by using their knowledge of the sounds letters make in words to improve their work. However, the tracking of children's progress from their starting points through their year in the Reception classes is less secure. As a result, whilst there has been a slight improvement from the previous year, children's progress is slower than in the rest of the school.

The school has put a range of interventions in place to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, including for pupils who may be disabled and/or have special educational needs, and those who may be potentially vulnerable. School data, which track the progress of different groups and individuals, show that all groups are making progress, and some have made impressive progress, particularly in writing.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.

The quality of teaching

Teaching engages and motivates pupils well so that they are keen to learn. Teachers use sharply measureable targets and assessment of pupils' prior learning in planning and delivering lessons and, where appropriate, go over work or give further challenge. This means that teachers' plans are key working documents which are regularly annotated to reflect pupils' on-going progress. Teachers' marking of pupils' work gives pupils the opportunity to respond to the advice given, reflect on their work or further pursue a target to improve their work. Comments from teachers, such as 'Can you explain your calculations?', are particularly effective in deepening pupils' understanding in mathematics. In Key Stage 1 teachers' marking focuses pupils on applying what they know about punctuation, such as highlighting commas in their writing. In this way pupils have increasing responsibility for their own learning. The strengths in teaching include teachers' subject knowledge which leads to pertinent questions during lessons, such as those which build on pupils' prior knowledge. In a mathematics lesson pupils were able to solve problems relating to time because the teacher carefully explained away misconceptions from the previous lesson.

Pupils, who may be disabled or those who have special educational needs, are well supported. A key strength of this work is the improved confidence pupils have in their ability to succeed and the positive attitudes they display towards the support they receive. In a Year 2 lesson pupils wrote about Paddington Bear's visit to London. As a result of the lively and well focused support from the teaching assistant, pupils produced written work of an impressive quality.

However, in some lessons, for example in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the pace of learning slows. This is because there are missed opportunities in activities to write and incorporate books in children's play or to practise using numbers and counting in areas of learning inside and outside. For example, in an exciting 'Bicycle Repair Shop', children were unable to write lists for repair as a result of a lack of writing materials provided. Similarly, in an engaging early science activity outside, there was limited opportunity for children to apply their literacy and numeracy skills when comparing cars travelling down a ramp.

The use of assessment, high expectations and challenge are now firmly established in the majority of lessons. There is an increased focus on presenting learning that is new. Pupils are able to consider their own challenge and aim for work that stretches their skills. For example, some pupils ask the teacher at the start of the lesson if they can try work set at the next level up. This approach, through the school ethos of 'aiming high', has a positive impact on pupils' learning, is encouraged by staff and welcomed by parents and carers.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

One parent and carer summed up the views of many by reporting that her child informed her that she attended a 'brilliant school'. In lessons, where teaching is the strongest, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Older pupils enjoy the dialogue with teachers about their learning and there is a calm and relaxed atmosphere of mutual respect. In a few lessons, mainly towards the end of the session, pupils begin to chat and slightly lose focus on their learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage generally play well together and know how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, children learnt about safety, understanding direction and taking turns when riding bikes and scooters through a 'roadway system' put together with guidance from adults. However, on some occasions, because opportunities for learning are not always made clear, behaviour, particularly when playing outside, is sometimes less focused.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – good

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The partner headteachers have restructured the roles and responsibilities of staff. By creating clear roles and responsibilities, school leaders have raised the expectations of the school community. Staff report they feel valued in the work they do and they consider themselves, quite rightly, to be an integral part of the relentless focus on improving school performance. Parents and carers have welcomed the strong model of school leadership and report high levels of confidence in the school. As one parent put it, 'The school is in a totally different place now as compared to a year ago.'

Since the last monitoring visit leaders and managers have wasted no time in supporting weaker teaching. Where support has been effective, school and external monitoring has shown that the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Governors and school leaders have an accurate view of where slower progress has been made in improving teaching and have clear plans in place to address the few remaining issues.

Staff and governors contribute to the evaluation and monitoring of the raising achievement plan. This leads to high levels of accountability within the school community. Governors receive timely and accurate information from school leaders about school performance. This, together with appropriate training from the local authority and an audit of governor skills, means they now challenge and support the work of the school appropriately. As a result, governors are playing a key role in shaping the strategic direction of the school. There is a smooth transition from the support by experienced local authority governors to the governing body being autonomous.

The actions taken so far, which include strengthening leadership at all levels, continued improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, building on pupils' prior learning, raised school performance and the support and challenge from the increasingly effective governing body, are clear indications that the school is securely building its capacity.

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

- improve systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning – good
- improve leadership and management – good.

External support

The local authority statement of action continues to meet requirements. The actions taken by the school to continue to improve teaching and learning, and raise standards, are well supported by the local authority senior adviser.