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25 November 2011

Miss Faye Bertham and Mrs Jan Isaac
Seconded Headteachers
Stanbridge Primary School
Stanbridge Road
Downend
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Dear Miss Bertham and Mrs Isaac

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Stanbridge Primary School

Following my visit with Mary Usher-Clark, additional inspector, to your school on 23–24 November 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 first 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

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 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 first monitoring inspection on 23–24 November 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the two seconded headteachers, staff, members of the governing body and the senior primary adviser from the local authority. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and met with a group of parents and carers. The team observed 16 lessons jointly with the seconded headteachers. They scrutinised documentation, the school's action and development plan and analysed the school's data and assessment information.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection in June 2011, the acting headteacher, covering the absence of the substantive headteacher, has left to take up a new post. The substantive headteacher is no longer in post. Since September 2011 two headteachers from within the local authority have been seconded to lead the school. One seconded headteacher works on a full-time basis and the other for two and a half days per week. An advanced skills teacher from the local authority is in place for two days per week. Two new governors from the local authority have joined the governing body.

There are two classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, four classes in Key Stage 1 and eight classes in Key Stage 2.

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

Early indications are that while attainment remains low in comparison with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are now beginning to make better progress in English and mathematics. Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection are leading to pupils aiming for higher levels in their work. In a Year 6 English lesson pupils improved their writing by adding a range of punctuation to their written work which would move them up to the next level. Pupils talk confidently about what they need to do to gain a higher level in their National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6.

Pupils throughout the school respond well in lessons because of increased expectations from teachers. They are keen to answer the teachers' questions and discuss work effectively together in groups. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, higher

ability pupils eagerly talked about ordering decimals and fractions. Searching questions from the teacher further challenged pupils who were, initially, not sure if their answers were correct. As a result, pupils demonstrated confident attitudes towards applying their prior knowledge of decimals and fractions to new work.

Pupils readily take responsibility for their learning. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage children worked as a team in the Christmas factory, wrapping cards and writing present lists for the Christmas elves. Another group of children enthusiastically looked for mathematical shapes around the school on a shape hunt. They were able to talk about and identify two-dimensional shapes and follow up on what they had learnt through a sorting activity back in the class.

Pupils know their targets and talk about how to improve their work. Pupils respond well to the teachers' marking in books by writing comments and correcting mistakes made. In lessons a particular strength is the way pupils work together when correcting one another's work. In this way pupils have opportunities to apply what they already know, and learn from their friends.

Parents and carers report that their children are enjoying the changes made to homework. They say that their children particularly like the 'pick and mix' homework tasks which give pupils responsibility for choosing activities. As a result, pupils are motivated to continue learning independently at home.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour is consistently good in lessons. Parents and carers report that their children are keen and enthusiastic. One parent summed up the views of others by saying, 'My son can't wait to get to school in the morning.' The new arrangements for the beginning of the school day are having a positive impact on pupils' improving progress. Pupils are better prepared to begin learning because of the calm start to the school day. Parents and carers report that children who were previously upset or nervous at the start of the day are now eager and confident. As a result of the new behaviour code, parents and carers report that their children are responding well to the school's higher expectations of good behaviour. Parents and carers of pupils whose first language is not English, comment on how their children now have friends and feel included in the life of the school. As a result, they are showing greater confidence in their learning.

The effectiveness of provision

The overall quality of teaching and learning is improving well. However, the school is aware that some variability remains in the quality of teaching. Teachers generally develop a good pace in lessons so that learning moves along well, as each task builds on the previous activity. Sometimes, however, teachers talk for too long. As a

result, there is less time for pupils to complete activities, such as written work and so the pace of learning slows.

Teachers' lesson planning differentiates tasks to meet the range of pupils' abilities. The use of assessment strategies in lessons is consistent across the school. Teachers routinely share lesson objectives with pupils at the start of each lesson. They refer back to the objectives as the lesson progresses. The school's motto 'Aim high and fly' is reflected in different challenges for each group. In the most effective lessons, teachers give pupils clear explanations, check their previous learning and set challenges which enable them to make good progress. In a few lessons, teachers miss opportunities to extend pupils' thinking, because the balance of prior learning and new challenges is uneven. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and as a result, pupils report that topics covered are interesting and enjoyable. Occasionally, in a few lessons, the end part of the session focuses more on what pupils have done rather than what they have learnt.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school – good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The two experienced seconded headteachers have wasted no time in setting systems in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They have established a rigorous system of monitoring teaching and have provided support for teachers through advice and training opportunities. Consequently, most teachers have reflected on and improved their practice well. The raised expectations in teaching and learning mean that all teachers are accountable for the progress of the pupils in their classes. The seconded headteachers have worked seamlessly to raise expectations of how pupils' behaviour contributes to their learning and in this aspect have been particularly successful.

The new leaders have built on the school's existing systems of data and information sharing well, so that all teachers have sharply measurable targets for tracking the progress of pupils in English and mathematics. Systems ensure that individuals who may be vulnerable or at risk of not making at least expected progress are quickly identified and actions put in place. As yet, not enough time has elapsed for progress targets to be further developed across the wider curriculum.

The seconded headteachers have given senior and middle leaders good support and opportunities to improve their leadership skills in their subject or key stage. Subject leaders in English and mathematics report that opportunities such as observing lessons with school leaders and local authority professionals have helped them to evaluate pupils' performance. The creation of curriculum teams has effectively

involved all members of staff in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress. However, it is too early to see the impact of the new structure on improving pupils' basic and wider skills throughout the curriculum. Senior and middle leaders are now fully involved in contributing to the school's self-evaluation and strategic direction. However, while there has been good progress in improving leadership, the school is aware there is still more work to be done to improve the consistency of leadership for each key stage.

The governing body appreciates the timely and accurate information it receives from the school, and the sharp focus on monitoring and evaluating actions, for example, in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Members of the governing body have carried out an audit of their own training needs. They have increased their skills by attending relevant training and as a result challenge and support the school well. New governors, including experienced governors from the local authority, have joined the governing body. Each governor is assigned to an aspect of the school's work, so creating a sharper focus and enabling governors to fulfil their roles to greater effect. Members of the governing body now have a better understanding of the school's work through working in school and carrying out 'learning walks' with senior leaders. The governing body contributes to the school's self-evaluation process well and now has an integral role in shaping the strategic direction of the school.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning – good
- Improve leadership – good

External support

The local authority's statement of action meets requirements. The seconded headteachers are well supported by the local authority's senior primary adviser. The local authority has taken effective decisions to put in place experienced personnel to lead the school and to improve the capacity of the governing body.