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19 October 2010

Mrs A Hilton-Childs  
Headteacher  
Meath Green Junior School  
Greenfields Road  
Horley  
Surrey  
RH6 8 HW

Dear Mrs Hilton-Childs,

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Meath Green Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 13 October 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures is satisfactory.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection is satisfactory.

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 Surrey.

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## **Special measures: monitoring of Meath Green Junior School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 13 October 2010**

#### **Evidence**

The HMI observed the school's work through observing lessons, scrutiny of documents and pupils' work, and met with the headteacher, senior and middle managers, groups of pupils, one parent, two governors, the Chair of the Governing Body and one representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the last visit, the local authority has continued its support for the school and a new School Improvement Partner has been appointed to help build capacity at senior and middle leadership and teacher levels. The school has restructured its senior leadership team with the promotion of the literacy subject leader to assistant head. A special education needs coordinator (SENCO) has been appointed to the middle management team. The school has been linked with a nearby junior school and has made contact with a primary school in North London. These links have resulted in productive working, and sharing of good practice.

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

The school has responded well to priority areas of improvement arising from the last monitoring visit, and has taken action to provide more reliable baseline assessments. Reassessments of Year 3 pupils' attainment upon entry to school, using the Performance Indicator in Primary Schools (PIPS), are beginning to show greater accuracy in monitoring of pupils' progress. Outcomes from these suggest that attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is not above national averages, as indicated through the school's nationally generated contextual data, but more in line with national averages. The number of pupils who make two levels plus progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is improving and this has reversed the three-year decline in standards and achievement. School in-house monitoring data indicate that pupils make greater progress in reading and mathematics than writing.

In 2010 pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, as evidenced through national tests, indicates that the number of pupils who attained the expected level in English and mathematics has improved from the previous year. The number of pupils attaining Level 4 or above in mathematics is below national averages. The number of pupils, who are at Level 4 or above for reading and writing is in line with national averages. Although writing standards have improved significantly in the last year, these are still not comparable with reading standards.

Based on these outcomes, the school has identified interventions that address areas of weakness; these interventions include a mental mathematics scheme, tackling underachievement in boys' writing skills and narrowing the gap in standards



between the numbers of pupils reaching Level 5 in reading compared to writing. Actions include a boys' writing project and teaching of Year 6 pupils in single-gender groups. The school is putting in place strategies to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

In lessons, most pupils make satisfactory progress and a few are making good progress. However, some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are less able do not attain the standards they should in line with their potential. Teachers are now setting learning objectives and planning appropriate learning activities based on their pupils' prior attainment. However, the pace of teaching and staging of activities do not consistently take into account the full ability range of pupils. Moreover, the role of teaching assistants are not systematically identified in lesson plans across all year groups, so that pupils of all abilities engage in appropriate tasks and activities.

A satisfactory range of assessment activities increasingly inform teachers of the progress that individual pupils make. In English, science and mathematics, pupils are much more aware of what they need to do to progress and improve their work and Years 4 and 5 pupils report that they enjoy peer- and self-assessment activities. Mathematics and literacy targets are in place, with pupils encouraged to identify their own targets. However, the links between the targets, ways of judging success and the learning objectives and how these relate to the information teachers have on their pupils, are not clear and consistent. Consequently, pupils do not always have a good understanding of how to evaluate their learning during the lesson.

Handwriting skills and presentation of work in all subjects have improved since the last visit with some good displays of work observed around the school. Pupils now report the pride they feel in their work, greatly valuing the constructive comments they receive on their work from their teachers.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
  - putting in place, by April 2010, an effective and consistent system for assessing pupils' progress – satisfactory.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

In general, pupils' behaviour is good and they are respectful, enthusiastic and keen to learn.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has revised its lesson observation process and criteria. This has had a positive impact on teachers who are much more aware of the importance of assessing progress against learning objectives. These objectives broadly meet the needs of the middle-range ability pupils; however, teachers do not



consistently plan objectives and activities for higher- and lower-range ability pupils. The teaching observed was satisfactory or better. This is a significantly improving picture over that at the time of the inspection and the last monitoring visit.

In science, pupils demonstrate a real curiosity for learning and are given good structured opportunities so that they can apply their knowledge and understanding to good effect. In mathematics, pupils practise simple number calculations to gain confidence in their numeracy skills; however, some of the learning is still too rooted in mechanistic tasks and pupils are not encouraged to transfer these to everyday contexts. Pupils, especially those of lower ability, are not consistently taught how to transfer their skills and knowledge to real life situations. Younger pupils are given good opportunities to engage in structured paired and group work but older pupils report that they are encouraged to work more independently and are sometimes given insufficient opportunities to interact with their peers. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to enliven lessons, but there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills.

The quality of feedback pupils receive in class is improving and most teachers check that pupils have learnt a teaching objective before moving on to the next activity. However, they do not always evaluate the responses of those who indicate that they have not fully understood, to adapt lesson planning or activities. Effective academic guidance and marking contribute to a more accurate assessment of pupils' learning. Although pupils receive constructive and sometimes detailed feedback on their written work, not all teachers follow up whether pupils have corrected or redrafted work to good effect.

Pupils have greater access to dictionaries during lessons, but pupils' use of these is inconsistent. As an effective spelling strategy, most teachers encourage pupils to identify the 'WOW' words and glossaries on display in classrooms. Cross-curricular links to develop literacy and numeracy skills in more meaningful contexts is still developing.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Ensure teaching improves by summer 2010 so that all is satisfactory, and much good, and that pupils' learning is appropriately challenging and based on good assessment information – good.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteacher has created greater clarity of role and responsibility for the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and her subject coordinators. The Single Action Plan and school self-evaluation plan demonstrate more effective self-evaluation processes and appropriately challenging targets for the school have been set within a realistic time-frame. These relate to the school's priorities of assessment and teaching, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and creation of accurate information on pupils' progress and standards.



Since the last monitoring visit, the school has made satisfactory progress on improving the rigour with which teaching and learning are monitored. Managers now scrutinise more closely the quality of assessment that lies at the core of teaching and learning. However, there are inconsistencies in the school's approach to observing lessons and moderation of these observations which means that some judgements are not in line with the text they describe and do not take account of the learning and progress of all groups of pupils.

The school has made good progress in communications with the parental forum and has effectively engaged parents and carers. The governing body has been proactive in working with the school on electronic data analysis and this has proved effective in enabling senior managers to better understand pupil performance data. Middle managers and teaching staff have not developed the same level of awareness.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Monitor the quality of teaching more rigorously so good practice can be identified and weaknesses eliminated by summer 2010 – satisfactory.
- Ensure there is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school by senior leaders and governors so that ambition to improve pupils' attainment is evident for the more able pupils by summer 2010 – satisfactory.
- Urgently develop a school improvement plan, based on rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, to tackle the weaknesses in pupils' outcomes which are evident from poor performance through Key Stage 2 – satisfactory.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide satisfactory support and has worked effectively with the school on its Single Action Plan. Since the last monitoring visit officers have helped to strengthen the capacity of the senior leadership team through the links created with a local junior school. This has enabled school staff to observe models of good practice.

The school demonstrates great commitment to improving education and care for its pupils. The local authority is working with the school and provides good support for senior managers but support for middle managers is not as effective. Ensuring more proactive ways of working with leaders and managers at all levels will be crucial in sustaining capacity to improve across all staff.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that the school provides effective training in monitoring pupil performance data so that all staff share a thorough, joint understanding of how to improve learning and progress in lessons.
- Ensure that the senior leadership team, with the local authority, develop:



- greater capacity and accountability in the middle management team
- clearer assessment and evaluation processes through identifying links between learning objectives, success criteria and targets
- more robust moderation of lesson observations for greater consistency and accuracy
- productive lesson planning between teaching assistants and teachers that meet the learning objectives for all ability levels across all year groups.

