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16 March 2012

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

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Stanbridge Primary School

Following my visit with Lesley Voaden, additional inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 March 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 second 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 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 second monitoring inspection on 14-15 March 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 and heard a group of 6 year old pupils read. The lead inspector spoke to parents and carers. The team observed 14 lessons jointly with the partner headteachers. With members of the senior leadership team inspectors analysed school data relating to pupils' progress and attainment.

Context

The two headteachers, seconded from the local authority continue to lead the school. One partner headteacher has been appointed as substantive headteacher from September 2012. An advanced skills teacher from the local authority continues to support teaching.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The performance of pupils continues to improve in English and mathematics. School tracking data, which compares pupils' progress each year, shows that most groups are now making more progress, as compared to the previous year. On-going school checks on pupils' progress show that progress in reading, writing and mathematics is now generally in line or above expectations in most year groups. While attainment remains low, there are clear indications that standards are beginning to rise.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 school data shows the improvements in standards of reading. Younger higher ability pupils read confidently with expression and state preferences for reading material. For example, some boys report that they prefer books about real life topics to story books. Parents and carers, who attended the school's early morning reading sessions, reported enjoying the opportunity to read with their children and the school's sharper emphasis on reading is welcomed. As a result of improved expectations and measurable targets for tracking progress, the school is confident that results for 2012 national curriculum tests in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 will demonstrate an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding national expectations in reading.

Pupils apply their basic skills well in curriculum areas. In a Year 2 mathematics lessons pupils applied their knowledge of multiplication tables confidently when solving problems related to money. In an effective information, communication and technology (ICT) lesson, pupils of all abilities expertly used their literacy skills to add

titles, captions and credits to their animations. As a result, work produced was of a high quality. In a science lesson pupils used their knowledge of data handling to record information from science investigations.

The successes since the last monitoring visit in improving the quality of learning have continued and include the accelerated progress of some groups and individuals. Whilst pupil progress is generally following a path of strong improvement, some older groups of pupils need to progress further in order to catch up and reach where they should be at the end of Key Stage 2. In response, the school has put a range of interventions in place for pupils, including pupils who may be disabled and/or have special educational needs and those who may be potentially vulnerable.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.

The quality of teaching

The improvements observed in teaching at the last monitoring visit have been developed further. Strengths in teaching include teachers' subject knowledge, use of assessment and higher expectations. As a result, pupils work well in lessons. In an investigative science lesson, which focused on testing different soils to find out about water retention and drainage, pupils were given the challenge of designing their own testing methods. They worked well in mixed ability groups, supporting one another and coming up with different testing methods. In this way pupils took responsibility for their own learning. Pupils were able to apply their prior knowledge of how a scientific test should be fair. The teacher extended pupils' learning by challenging them to decide on their own method of recording the test results. The teacher skilfully linked the content of the science lesson to real life situations. As a result, pupils were keen to continue researching the subject at home.

Pupils, who may be disabled or those who have special educational needs, are generally well supported during lessons through prompts from teaching assistants. At the start of lessons teaching assistants reshape questions for pupils to aid their understanding and this continues during group sessions. For example, in a mathematics lesson for younger pupils, the teaching assistant broke down the learning into small steps so that pupils were able to use their skills of subtraction when working out shopping problems within ten pence.

As teaching continues to improve, gaps in the attainment of pupils as compared to national expectations are narrowing. Where teachers challenge pupils to reflect on what they have learnt during the lesson, by using assessment, pupils talk about how they have grasped the new learning. However, in the delivery of some lessons, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to present learning that is new. In these lessons teachers do take account of prior learning but the focus of the lesson tends to be on what pupils already know. Consequently, the pace of pupils' progress slows.

Where tasks are well matched to extend pupils' learning they are motivated and engaged and make good progress. For example, in Year 1 youngsters used a skittle game outside to aid their understanding of subtraction within ten. This activity was well supported by the adult who encouraged the children to record simple number sentences. As a result, pupils made effective progress in transferring their experience of a practical activity to the beginnings of recording in mathematics. However, in some lessons, for example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, such as those relating to the production of sounds and letters, the delivery of the lesson does not always take account of prior learning and so teaching, including support for individuals and groups is less effective.

The use of assessment is now embedded in all lessons at the start and end of the lesson. There are increased opportunities for pupils to reflect on how they are doing and also to respond to teachers' marking in their books. Where the quality of teaching is secure or better teachers guide the whole class at points through the lesson ensuring that the challenge is high and the pace of learning keeps moving forward.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In all lessons observed on this visit, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning were very positive. This is because teachers have high expectations and relationships are strong. Pupils show respect for the adults working with them and are clear about the parameters for acceptable behaviour. Pupils are motivated to learn by the approach from teachers, such as in a 'hands on' investigative science lesson. Pupils behave well with visiting staff, such as listening carefully to the visiting music specialist during a drumming session. Older pupils enjoy being responsible for supporting younger pupils during the reading sessions with parents and carers. Parents and carers continue to appreciate the changes in morning routines which create a calm start to the school day. Consequently, pupils are better prepared for being responsive to teaching and learning.

The school and local authority representative reported that the behaviour and active involvement of the school council in the recent interviews for the position of substantive headteacher was extremely creditable.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection 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, together with the senior leadership team, have maintained the drive and ambition to continue improving the quality of teaching and learning and in this they are being successful. Staff report they are well supported by the leadership team and that there is a real focus on equality of opportunity for all pupils. As one member of staff aptly reported, 'they (the partner headteachers) are advocates for children'. The systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning are now embedded in the school's daily work. Staff are clear about expectations related to improving the quality of their teaching. The comprehensive system for tracking pupil progress ensures that teachers have good quality information to work with when planning learning tasks and tracking pupils' progress. This information feeds into teachers' planning so that teaching is generally pitched to match pupils' abilities. The school is aware that the delivery of some lessons does not always take account of prior learning and currently lacks sufficient challenge to accelerate the progress of all pupils.

The model of leadership at all levels has empowered middle leaders, who now play a key role in the strategic development of the school. A notable success has been the commitment of middle leaders in improving teaching and learning within their phase, such as through the leadership of Key Stage 1. The creation of subject teams means that all staff and governors are involved in an aspect of the school's work. Team leaders model high expectations and their monitoring observations feed into the school's Raising Achievement Plan.

Members of the governing body have recognised the need for securing stability in the leadership team and have been successful in recruiting one of the partner headteachers as substantive headteacher. With the continuation of the partner headteacher together with the recruitment of a substantive headteacher, governors are now very confident in the future capacity of the school leadership. The actions taken so far, which include improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, use of assessment, improvements in pupils' basic skills and systems firmly in place for monitoring teaching and learning support this.

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 very effective partnership between the partner headteachers and the local authority senior adviser means that actions taken by the school to improve the quality of teaching are well supported.

Only in exceptional circumstances, where they are crucial to the school's future success should priorities for further improvement be added

Following evidence from joint observations with partner headteachers and discussions, the following amendment to the first bullet point relating to 'Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school' would be helpful.

- Taking account of pupils' prior learning when planning ***and delivering*** lessons, in order to ensure work is challenging