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Mrs P Honeychurch  
Headteacher  
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Chivers Close  
Southsea  
Hampshire  
PO5 1HG

Dear Mrs Honeychurch

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Cottage Grove Primary School

Following my visit with Robina Tomes, Additional Inspector, to your school on 1-2 December 2009, 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 November 2009. 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

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 Board, and the Director of Children's Services for Portsmouth City Council.

Yours sincerely

John Seal

Her Majesty's Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Special measures: monitoring of Cottage Grove Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 1-2 December 2009

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, members of staff, pupils and representatives from the Interim Executive Body (IEB) and local authority.

## Context

Since the last monitoring visit, there have been several changes in staffing. From the beginning of the autumn term, the school appointed a Director of Improving Schools Programme (ISP) who works with the school three days a week and whose roles include being the temporary literacy manager, and a mathematics teacher for groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6. She is also a member of the senior leadership team. In the mixed Year 3 and 4 team, one of the class teachers is absent due to illness and a teacher from the Year 1 and 2 team resigned and left at half term. To ensure continuity in these classes, the school has deployed its own cover supervisors. The school's literacy manager, who was teaching in Key Stage 1, was appointed to a local authority role at the end of the summer term.

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

The unvalidated results for the 2009 Key Stage 2 national tests in English and mathematics indicate that, although pupils' overall attainment continues to be below average, a significantly higher proportion of pupils than in previous years made good progress and attained results that were in line with those expected nationally.

The number of pupils attaining nationally expected levels in assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2009 improved to be broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was above the national average.

The school's data and pupils' work seen during the visit indicate an improving but inconsistent picture of attainment and progress. Pupils' progress in Years 5 and 6 is good. There is more of a mixed picture in Years 3 and 4. Many pupils are making good progress but there are a significant number who are still underachieving. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are making satisfactory progress overall but within the year groups, this varies from satisfactory to good.

The school's information regarding younger children in Nursery and Reception indicates that they made good progress in the previous year from very low starting points and start Year 1 slightly above average.



Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and achievement by ensuring that all lessons provide activities that match the needs of pupils of all abilities in each class - satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Care for pupils is of high quality and ensures that children feel safe and secure within school and are well looked after. There have been very few pupils excluded and there is a good level of support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils behave well around school and work and play well together. They are eager to welcome visitors and share their positive view of the school. The school is working hard to improve attendance and there has been small improvement this term. The school's work on emphasising the importance of good attendance has ensured that more parents and pupils are aware of the recently implemented strategies. Basic skills are developing well in literacy and numeracy for a greater number of pupils which is improving their development for future life and work.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve attendance by continuing to emphasise to parents the impact that absence from school has on their child's progress - satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

The school has improved planning, assessment and target setting. Since the last visit, there is a higher proportion of good teaching, but this is not consistent across the whole school. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching is nearly always good with some outstanding features. Planning is consistent and meets the needs of most pupils most of the time, especially in literacy and numeracy. Lessons are well organised and structured. Teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics enables them to challenge pupils' thinking and ask questions which move learning on at a good pace. A good example was the work on statistics in Year 5 and 6, where good relevant material was used to analyse the school's attendance data. Pupils are clear about what they have to do. Guided reading is well planned and resourced which has resulted in many pupils being enthused by books and story telling. Target setting is clear and pupils know what they need to do to improve their skills and understanding. Pupils from different groups are well supported including those who have English as an additional language or special educational needs and/or disabilities.

In Years 3 and 4 and Key Stage 1, most lessons are satisfactory with a few being good. However, the number of lessons which are satisfactory rather than good is too high. As a result, the progress pupils make varies from class to class and from lesson to lesson. This means that while many pupils make good progress some of the time,



this is not consistent. The main causes are teacher absence and lessons which are less effective. These lessons are less well planned to meet pupils' individual needs or to ensure they receive the appropriate support in order to help them make progress or understand what they have to do. Where this happens, over time pupils' progress is in danger of not being at a pace to meet nationally expected standards of attainment.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective planning and well matched resources enable children to make a good start in the Nursery. Consistent routines and good modelling from staff mean that children feel safe, and can learn to share and work together well. The use of direct teaching and purposeful play, together with appropriate questioning and interventions, foster the development of children's learning and is leading to them becoming independent learners. The careful and detailed observations and assessments made by staff show that progress and attainment overall are good across the Foundation Stage.

Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective and sensitive care and support because of the school's effective work with other agencies and its own caring ethos.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve curriculum planning for literacy and numeracy in the mixed-age classes so that it caters for the full spread of ages and abilities - satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school has worked successfully to develop an improvement plan which meets its priorities. This is monitored effectively by the IEB and local authority. The senior leadership and management team is still in the early stages of a restructure from the beginning of the autumn term. Lessons are regularly monitored by the headteacher and, where there has been ineffective teaching, this has been addressed directly and appropriately. There are secure systems in place which effectively identify pupils' attainment and progress. The school is capably led by the headteacher but the roles and responsibilities of some of the leadership and management team are not yet sufficiently developed. As a consequence, leaders are hindered from being able to hold all teachers to account and ensure they understand the sense of urgency required to consistently sustain all pupils' progress over time. The IEB knows the school's strengths and weaknesses and are robust in their challenge and support. Safeguarding is secure and all procedures, training and the single central register are in place.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure systems to track and analyse pupils' progress provide information that clearly shows pupils' rates of progress, particularly in



the longer term, so that the school can take effective action more promptly – satisfactory

- Ensure that the school's improvement plan contains clear success criteria, so that outcomes can be accurately measured and all leaders held accountable, in order to accelerate the pace of change within the school - satisfactory

### External support

The local authority continues to provide effective support which meets the needs of the school. This support includes frequent, regular and supportive visits from the school's School Improvement Partner, primary teaching consultant and staff from the ethnic minority support service.