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Mr Mark Snow
The Headteacher
Barton Primary School and Early Years Centre
Green Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 2AN

Dear Mr Snow

Special measures monitoring inspection of Barton Primary School and Early Years Centre

Following my visit with Stephanie Matthews, Additional Inspector, to your school on 22 and 23 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2013. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

the school is making reasonable progress toward the removal of special measure.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Isle of Wight.

Yours sincerely

Phillip Minns
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers are more ambitious for pupils' progress, and the quality of the presentation of their work
 - ensuring teachers provide activities which engage pupils' interests, challenge pupils to think hard, make decisions for themselves, and sustain their concentration throughout the lesson
 - making sure that teachers use information about pupils' attainment to plan work that is securely based on their previous learning and is adjusted to meet their varied needs and abilities
 - explain to pupils what they are expected to achieve in lessons, how they will know they have been successful, and what they can do to aspire to higher levels of achievement
 - checking pupils' progress throughout lessons and adjusting the work if it is too hard or too easy
 - developing the skills of all adults in asking pupils questions that require them to think through their ideas and deepen their understanding
 - ensuring marking tells pupils how their work might be improved and they are given time to respond to teachers' comments and learn from their mistakes
 - clarifying the role of teaching assistants so that they support pupils effectively throughout lessons and promote their ability to work by themselves, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Raise achievement in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school by:
 - providing pupils with a good range of opportunities to develop the vocabulary they need to communicate effectively with adults and each other and to enhance their writing
 - reviewing the programme for teaching the sounds letters make (phonics) so that pupils know how to read unfamiliar words successfully, and spell correctly
 - ensuring pupils make good use of the library to read books that are at the right level for them and read widely in different subjects
 - developing a clear programme for teaching mathematics that builds up pupils' knowledge and understanding and offers increasing levels of challenge as pupils move through the school
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn and remember their multiplication tables and number bonds
 - teaching pupils the written methods to calculate accurately and solve problems with confidence.
- Ensure that all pupils attend more regularly by working with parents to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time.

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, and build the capacity to improve by:
 - drawing up a plan for the long-term development of the school to raise aspirations and ambitions for pupils' attainment
 - revising the short-term improvement plan so it is focused sharply on the improvements needed to increase rates of pupils' progress, and checking that it is having the anticipated impact on pupils' achievements
 - reviewing the structure for the leadership and management of the school so that it is clear who is responsible for what, including the line management of the teaching assistants
 - developing the skills of the subject and key stage leaders so that they contribute fully to the improvement of the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement
 - putting into practice robust appraisal systems so that all staff are held accountable for their contributions to pupils' achievements
 - reviewing the curriculum so that it is broad and balanced and gives due attention to the development of pupils' skills in English and mathematics
 - providing a thorough training programme to raise the skills of all staff in teaching mathematics, the sounds letters make, spoken language and on how best to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 January 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with a group of pupils, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers with subject leadership responsibilities, a representative from the local authority and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board.

Context

Since the first monitoring visit staffing has remained relatively settled. One teacher is currently on a phased return to work following a period of illness and teaching each afternoon. The deputy headteacher is supporting by teaching the class for the mornings. A new business manager has just been appointed and one teaching assistant left the school. Local authority support and challenge are now provided by Hampshire County Council.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Accurate assessments are now in place for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics and these have provided a firm starting point from which the school can begin to judge the progress pupils make. Through working with the local authority advisers for English and mathematics, teachers have begun to put in place long and medium term plans for these two subjects, so that pupils cover the expected curriculum. There is some evidence of increased levels of challenge in mathematics lessons leading to pupils making accelerated progress. However, this is not yet sufficiently evident across the whole school. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to undertake problem-solving activities in mathematics that enable them to practise the skills they are learning in lessons. Mental mathematics activities are beginning to provide pupils with the rapid recall of number facts they need. However, teachers are not checking carefully enough what pupils can do and understand so that they are able to tackle misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge. A commercial scheme of work has been adopted for the teaching of literacy. However, the delivery of this approach is not being closely monitored and there is little evidence of pupils' learning accelerating.

The quality of teaching

Teaching has improved since the inspection took place in May 2013. Planning is more rigorous and teachers are preparing lessons with clear learning intentions and activities that are aimed to meet the needs of pupils with different ability levels. As a result, the amount of teaching that is inadequate is reducing. The quality and quantity of work pupils do in their books are improving and teachers' comments are increasingly helping pupils to move their learning forward. However, the quality of marking is still not consistently good across the school.

At present, teachers are not checking pupils' progress carefully enough during lessons, so that work is not always pitched at a high enough level to challenge their understanding.

The impact of teaching assistants on pupils' learning remains inconsistent. This was particularly evident in a few mathematics lessons where the teaching assistants did not reinforce the learning the teacher had planned. As a consequence, pupils did not make sufficient progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Current levels of pupils' attendance have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Attendance is well monitored. The careful analysis of absence for different groups of pupils and different year groups enables targeted improvements to take place. The interim executive board monitors attendance in board meetings and one board member has specific responsibility to monitor this aspect of the school. Expectations on attendance have increased and the school is successfully working with parents to promote good attendance. Consequently, current levels of attendance are well above the national average.

During the inspection, pupils spoke positively about the school. They also demonstrated positive attitudes to learning in lessons and behaved well around the school.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher and the interim executive board are providing strong senior leadership to the school. The school improvement plan is focused on improving the quality of teaching and is being closely monitored in conjunction with the local authority's statement of action. The headteacher is providing teachers with clear guidance and support to enable them to improve their teaching and is carrying out systematic monitoring to gauge the extent to which teaching is improving.

Some teachers who lead subjects are demonstrating strong leadership. For example, the mathematics leader has worked closely with the local authority inspector to identify areas of weakness in provision. These have started to be addressed through staff training, policy development and new resources. This subject leader also provided the interim executive board with a detailed and informative presentation on the current position and future plans for the subject. However, this level of leadership is not evident across other curriculum areas. This is because initiatives are introduced but not monitored sufficiently well to ensure that they lead to improvements in practice that enable pupils to make accelerated progress.

The Chair of the Interim Executive Board is showing a strong commitment to the improvement of the school. Board meetings focus on the improvement agenda and members provide challenge to the school to evaluate whether it is on track to make the progress needed.

External support

The school is receiving a good level of support from the local authority. Leaders in the school and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board value the support received. There is evidence that it is making a good contribution to the progress of the school. The support to strengthen subject leadership in mathematics has been particularly effective. It is important that the local authority continues to support the school's work in rigorously addressing inadequate teaching.

At the first monitoring inspection the statement of action provided by the Isle of Wight local authority was not fit for purpose. The statement of action now in place, from Hampshire local authority, is fit for purpose.