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26 November 2010

Mr James Pearce  
Lodge Primary School  
Oak Lane  
West Bromwich  
B70 8PN

Dear Mr Pearce

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Lodge Primary School**

Following my visit with my colleague, John Paul, additional inspector, to your school on 24–25 November 2010, 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 May 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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 – satisfactory.

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

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 Sandwell.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010**

- Raise levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and accelerate pupils' learning and progress across all three key stages by:
  - setting a clear direction for the school that focuses on improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching by strengthening the role of all leaders and holding staff to account for pupils' progress
  - ensuring that the tracking of pupils' progress is up to date and the information is used effectively to address underachievement
  - ensuring that programmes to raise attainment in phonics and writing are consistently and securely implemented by all staff
  - increasing pupils' levels of attendance.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching across all three key stages by:
  - ensuring that lesson planning makes effective use of assessment information to match activities accurately to pupils' abilities and that teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
  - identifying, within lessons, when pupils are ready for the next steps in their learning
  - responding to pupils' work and informing them of the actions they need to take to improve and achieve their learning targets
  - setting clear expectations of what is required in lessons and establishing robust systems to check that all staff are following these guidelines.
  
- To improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement, leaders and managers should:
  - ensure that all staff engage fully with the school's drive for further improvement
  - be more systematic in following up weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment within challenging timescales
  - in all strategic planning, add specific, quantifiable and timed targets so that progress towards them is measurable and can be reported accurately.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Lodge Primary School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 24–25 November 2010**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leadership team, staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and the headteacher from the partner school.

#### **Context**

There have been significant staffing changes in the school since September 2010. Ten teachers, including two assistant headteachers, have been appointed to replace those who resigned their posts for a variety of reasons. Consequently, the teaching staff are almost completely different from those who were in post at the time of the last inspection. In addition, five new members of the governing body have been recruited.

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

There is still significant underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. The school's data and pupils' work clearly show that too many pupils are not achieving as much as they could. However, there are promising signs of recovery. Improvements in teaching and learning are beginning to plug some of the gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge. The range, volume and quality of work that pupils are expected to complete is also increasing. Programmes to raise attainment in letters and sounds, writing and mental arithmetic are being systematically implemented. These are beginning to narrow the gap between what pupils are attaining and what they are capable of. Despite this, weaknesses in the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills adversely affect their reading and writing ability. Some pupils' written work is marred by poor letter formation, weak spelling and inaccurate punctuation. In addition, opportunities are not always taken to develop their writing skills in other subjects. Progress in mathematics is hindered by pupils' poor calculation skills and their recall of multiplication facts often lacks sharpness and precision.

School leaders are moulding the new team and establishing a clear direction for the school with the prime focus on raising achievement. Decisive action, such as implementing a regular testing and assessment regime, is providing leaders with more accurate and reliable data. Tracking systems have been established which chart pupils' progress. Outcomes are being shared with teachers at half-termly pupil progress meetings to help them identify those pupils or groups making insufficient progress.

Attendance has improved. This term it has risen to 93.5%, which is just below the national average. Punctuality in the morning has also improved due to measures taken by the school to highlight the issue. Improved communication and partnership between the school and parents and carers, coupled with strategies such as the open door policy in the morning, high visibility of staff and rewards for attendance, are proving successful.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection

- Raise levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and accelerate pupils' learning and progress across all three key stages – satisfactory.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

During the inspection, pupils gave every indication of enjoying learning. They contributed well to lessons and showed a clear understanding of classroom routines. They worked together well in pairs or larger groups to support each other's learning. Most pupils behaved sensibly in the corridors between lessons and in the playground. The majority of pupils feel safe and secure.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons seen were evenly spread between good and satisfactory. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are increasing. Planning suitably identifies learning objectives and success criteria, although the vocabulary used is sometimes too complex which makes teachers' expectations difficult for pupils to understand. Assessment information is beginning to inform planning. Consequently, activities are becoming better matched to pupils' needs. Assessment for learning strategies such as talking partners, the use of mini-white boards and peer- and self-assessment are regularly being used by teachers in lessons. Information from ongoing assessment is also increasingly being used to modify lesson plans and identify next steps in pupils' learning.

The implementation of key policies, such as those relating to teaching and learning, marking and behaviour have established clear expectations for all staff. Robust systems have been established to check that all staff follow these guidelines. Although all are being implemented, leaders know there is some inconsistency. For instance, while marking is regular, it does not always identify precisely what pupils need to do next to improve. In addition, some marking is too detailed which makes it difficult for pupils to understand exactly what they are required to do. Although some pupils are provided with time to respond to teachers' comments, this is not the always the case.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection

- Improve the quality of teaching across all three key stages – satisfactory.

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

Leaders and managers are determined to develop and improve the school. All staff demonstrate a desire and commitment to school improvement. New teachers to the school have been well inducted. The appointment of the two assistant headteachers as phase leaders, both Early Years Foundation Stage leaders and the special educational needs coordinator has strengthened the leadership of the school. Together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, they are increasingly holding teachers to account for pupils' progress. A rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation has been implemented including learning walks, planning scrutinies, lesson observations and book trawls. Judgements are accurate. Appropriate action has been taken in response to the outcomes. Subsequent action plans, reports and evaluations contain clear timescales and measurable outcomes.

Good relationships have been established with the partner school. Timely and effective support has been provided on aspects such as policy development, implementation of procedures and the sharing of good practice. This is helping to increase the skills and understanding of senior leaders. The governing body is increasing its involvement in the school and beginning to hold the school to account for standards and quality. Its members are now better informed following the establishment of a six-weekly steering group meeting. At the time of the inspection, the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils met requirements.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement, leaders and managers – satisfactory.

## **External support**

The local authority's statement is good and clearly focused plans detail appropriate action. The local authority has provided extensive support and challenge and this has given the school the impetus for change and improvement. There has been appropriate challenge for the senior management team to have a shared vision and determination to work together for improvement. For instance, Task Group meetings, review meetings and extended additional team meetings have helped to maintain the school's focus on school improvement and helped target and address identified weaknesses. The support provided by the School Improvement Partner is of good quality. He has regularly attended meetings, provided good advice and timely support. His notes of visit are very thorough and contain good evaluation of strengths and areas for development. His work is greatly appreciated by the school.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

The priorities remain those identified in the inspection of May 2010. With regard to these, the school's specific priorities are to:

- ensure outcomes from testing and assessments are used precisely to target and intervene with those pupils making less than expected progress
- improve standards further in writing and mental mathematics by embedding those strategies that have recently been implemented
- improve the quality of marking further by revisiting the marking policy and ensuring it is consistently applied throughout the school.