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10 March 2011

Mrs M Harrison  
Headteacher  
Dukesgate Primary School  
Earlesdon Crescent  
Little Hulton  
Salford  
Greater Manchester  
M38 9HF

Dear Mrs Harrison

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Dukesgate Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 March 2011, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection, which took place in December 2009. 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 – inadequate

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – 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 Salford.

Yours sincerely

Mr Michael McIlroy  
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - accelerating the pace of learning during lessons
  - ensuring that pupils are more actively involved in their learning
  - matching work more precisely to individual needs
  - using assessment effectively so that pupils know what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
  - making it more relevant, practical and motivating so that pupils are more engaged with their learning
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills across a range of subjects.
- Accelerate the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by putting effective intervention strategies in place so that they are consistently well supported.

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

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection from 08 Mar 2011 to 09 Mar 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and observed nine lessons. He met with the headteacher, nominated staff, a group of pupils and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB). A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring visit, three members of staff have left the school. Two classes are currently taught by temporary teachers. The governing body has been replaced by an IEB.

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

Pupils' attainment remains low but is rising. School data indicate that pupils in the current Year 6 attain better in reading and writing than in mathematics. Pupils are more aware of the National Curriculum levels they are working at and those they are working towards. This is partly because pupils' individual targets are displayed in workbooks. Pupils made satisfactory progress overall in lessons observed during the inspection. The rate of progress, however, varies from year group to year group. In some lessons, pupils made good progress, particularly where teaching was good.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall and some make good progress. There has been some discontinuity in the management of this area recently but this has been restored under the leadership of two senior managers with the strong support of consultants. Together, they have remedied gaps in information about pupils and completed administrative tasks to gain more support for them. Following direction from the IEB, the suitability of intervention strategies has been reviewed. An audit of support staff's skills has been carried out and they have been more effectively deployed. Systems to track the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable have been updated. Support plans have been improved and pupils' books checked to ensure that their work matches their needs. Links with the school's psychology service have been strengthened and a programme of developing provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties begun. The school has sharpened its focus on younger year groups to identify pupils' needs at an earlier stage. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are looked after are starting to make faster progress.

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

- Accelerate the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities – satisfactory

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

The behaviour of pupils observed during the monitoring visit was satisfactory. Most understand the school's behaviour policy. However, exclusions have risen since the last monitoring visit. There is some off-task activity in a few classes, caused partly by pupils not being challenged enough. Attendance is currently below last year's figure of 93.5%. It was lower in the first term of the academic year but has since improved strongly.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Teaching has improved satisfactorily. During this monitoring visit, no inadequate teaching was observed. However, not enough teaching is consistently good to overcome previous underachievement. Increasingly, pupils are given work that is better matched to their abilities. Planning is more consistent and now covers guided reading sessions. Most planning identifies tasks that pupils of different abilities will complete in lessons. However, some planning does not take enough account of pupils' range of abilities. Additional adults are well used to support less-able pupils. Work is generally marked in line with the new marking policy. In some books, teachers write thought-provoking questions but these are not always responded to by pupils. There are inconsistencies in the marking of homework. Some is only briefly marked and some gives pupils constructive feedback. Pupils' books confirm that they have more opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects, although not as consistently in science. Opportunities to reinforce skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar were not always fully exploited in lessons.

Where teaching was good, prior learning was drawn on well and resources were attractive and well organised. Good explanations were given so that pupils knew what to do. Activities were relevant and captured pupils' imagination and interest. The pace of teaching and learning was fast and sustained. Questioning was used well and good links were made with other subjects.

In satisfactory teaching, the pace of learning was slower. Time was not always well used and in some lessons, pupils did not produce enough independent work. In a few lessons, the plenary sessions were too short so key points were insufficiently revised; activities were not well timed, or questions used well to challenge pupils and there were too few opportunities to make the most of links with literacy and numeracy. Additionally, pupils were not challenged enough to think through their answers and opportunities for discussion to extend understanding were missed.

The curriculum remains focused on mathematics, English and the 'creative curriculum'. There is more evidence of pupils writing at length but steps have not been taken to display exemplars of good writing and mathematical work. Reading resources for more-able pupils

have been increased. Some activities, which made a limited contribution to pupils' learning, have been ended. An audit has been held to check that future topics will interest boys and there are plans to introduce a theme on financial awareness, which will link to mathematics. Teaching of the sounds that letters make has been extended into Year 3. Homework has been introduced. This provides good opportunities to write at length but fewer opportunities to complete mathematical work. There is no formal homework policy. Some steps have been taken to develop a website, which pupils can use at home for revision and homework. More extra-curricular activities are taking place and the range of intervention strategies has been refined. The school has still to begin monitoring these closely to ensure that pupils are withdrawn from lessons only when necessary. Steps have been taken to lengthen the school day.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better – satisfactory
- Improve the quality of the curriculum – satisfactory

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

At the last monitoring inspection, the school was asked to resolve the uncertainty about how it is governed quickly. The school is now governed by an IEB which has accelerated progress at the school. Its experienced members have moved fast to get to know the school and to hold senior leaders much more to account for their actions. The IEB members recognise the urgency that is required to improve the school. As a result, they have clearly set out their expectations of staff and leaders and have ensured that major weaknesses in teaching have been tackled. They also check school data, assessments of pupils' progress and the results of monitoring. They have met with parents and sought to engage them more in school life.

Senior leaders check teachers' planning more rigorously. They are more involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning, which previously was led mainly by the local authority. A monitoring calendar has been drawn up and staff receive feedback from observations. These procedures are still not sufficiently robust and are not focused sharply enough on the progress made by pupils and on the quality of teaching. A few staff have had the opportunity to observe good teaching in other settings and within the school. The IEB has taken the constructive step of asking that these observations take place in similar schools. Staff are now allocated time to feedback information from training courses and discuss good practice at meetings. A number of measures have been taken by school leaders to improve the quality of teaching. A new teaching and learning policy has been drawn up although this does not set out the key elements of good teaching clearly enough. Training has been held on improving pupils' writing skills and on a coaching programme for staff. However, senior leaders have yet to develop a strategic approach that focuses sharply on improving teaching and learning so that pupils' progress improves much more rapidly.

School improvement planning is reviewed termly, but is not analytical enough. There is a stronger focus on a weekly lesson that promotes basic skills but not all pupils are fully aware of this approach. Teachers' assessments of the National Curriculum levels pupils are working at have been checked and improved. These are in a format which shows where underachievement lies and which teachers use in their planning. A scheme to improve pupils' handwriting has been agreed but is not yet in use. A number of workshops have been held about how parents can help their child with reading.

### **External support**

The local authority offers good support to the school. It has provided additional funding and facilitated the establishment of the IEB. Consultants have helped to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The School Improvement Partner provides informative reports on the school's progress. The headteacher is supported by a Local Leader of Education and the coordinator for special educational needs from this leader's school has assisted in the improvement of special educational needs provision.