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1 April 2011

Mrs S Curtis  
Headteacher  
Meadow Community Primary School  
Dolphin Crescent  
Great Sutton  
Ellesmere Port  
Cheshire  
CH66 4SZ

Dear Mrs Curtis,

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Meadow Community Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 31 March 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. I would also like to thank the Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority representative who gave up time to speak with me and to send special thanks to pupils who met with me at lunchtime.

There have been some changes in leadership since the last inspection. A deputy headteacher joined the school, initially in a temporary capacity but appointed to a permanent position with effect from September 2011. An assistant headteacher is currently absent and has resigned with effect from Easter 2011. A new senior leader has been appointed and another one has taken on different responsibilities. Two teachers and a teaching assistant have been appointed and there have been changes to the deployment of some staff. The previous Chair of the Governing Body has resigned. Some new governors have joined the governing body, one of whom is acting as the Chair for one year.

As a result of the inspection on 22-23 September 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The headteacher has been very successful in promoting a shared vision among staff, motivating them and securing their commitment to improving the school. In this, she is well supported by the deputy headteacher and increasingly by other senior leaders. Well-judged actions have been taken to create a sense of unity and a shared understanding of what needs to be done. Changes to the school day and other routines have brought the infant and junior phases into line. Newly created responsibility teams, where teachers across the school, along with teaching assistants and the governing body, work together on developing

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key aspects, is promoting consistency and a common understanding. There has been a great deal of training, both internally and using external personnel. In addition to input for all staff, there is individual coaching and support where necessary. These and other actions are developing the expertise of staff and their understanding of how to improve practice. Staff are very positive about the way they now feel encouraged and empowered to embrace change. Senior leaders use comprehensive monitoring and evaluation to check on the impact of actions taken and refine them further.

The improving quality of teaching shows that actions are being effective. The school's monitoring shows that the proportion of lessons that are good or better is increasing. Teachers are adopting strategies, such as talking partners, learning buddies and group work, to make lessons livelier and to ensure pupils are more actively involved in their learning. The extent to which pupils' different needs are being met has been reviewed which has resulted in changes being made within lessons and to some groupings, with more planned. Even with the improvements, some lessons are still overly formal with pupils not actively enough involved and with work or input that is not closely matched to their different needs. Adults often give helpful explanations that aid learning but, occasionally concepts are not clearly explained and misunderstandings are not corrected. The curriculum has been reviewed and changes are underway to promote a more-creative approach with greater emphasis on promoting key skills. While plans are positive, this work is at relatively early stages of implementation.

The assessment and tracking of pupils' attainment and progress have improved. From a position of sketchy and unreliable data in the past, there is now a system which is providing more comprehensive information about where pupils are at in their learning and how different groups are performing. It is indicating that, while standards are still lower than they should be, pupils' progress is accelerating, albeit not uniformly. Actions are underway to check and promote the accuracy of the data.

Much work has taken place to promote good behaviour and its consistent management. Pupils are very aware of the newly adopted 'It's good to be green' system and say it is making a difference. They are very positive about the privileges that can be earned and say it motivates them to behave well. Pupils spoken with believe behaviour to be good overall, but a minority still perceive that a few do not follow all rules, such as the rota for playing football at playtime.

Governance has improved considerably with the expertise brought by the newly appointed additional governors, especially that of the Chair of the Governing Body. Appropriate structures and procedures are now in place. Training has been given and good practice is being modelled. Actions are underway to ensure other members of the governing body develop their understanding and involvement. This is necessary because the current arrangements for chairing the governing body are temporary.

Action to keep pupils safe now has a high priority and much has been done to improve security, procedures and paperwork. Significant attention has been paid to ensuring that

pupils feel, and know how to keep themselves, safe. They appreciate the strategies adopted, such as smiley and sad 'faces', worry boxes, identification of people they can approach for support and input from external experts. The school is keen to go beyond meeting minimum requirements and to embrace good practice and is aware of areas that could be further strengthened.

The local authority's statement of action meets requirements and is being implemented to positive effect. The school is receiving valuable and valued support across a range of areas from the local authority. There has been regular monitoring of the school's progress, and arrangements for this into the future are in the process of being clarified. The School Improvement Partner's contribution is also valued. The school is proactive in seeking out good practice in other schools to learn from.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ms Joan McKenna  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 22-23 September 2010**

- Meet all statutory safeguarding requirements in full and update all safeguarding documentation.
  
- Leaders and managers of the school should improve the motivation and expertise of staff by:
  - raising the achievement and meeting the learning needs of all pupils, particularly those groups of pupils who are currently underachieving and do not have an equality of opportunity when compared to other pupils
  - developing the curriculum to provide lessons that are more interesting, exciting and relevant for pupils
  - dealing consistently with unacceptable behaviour.
  
- Improve governance so that the governing body rigorously holds the school to account for its performance.