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24 June 2011

Mrs C Weaver  
Newhall Community Junior School  
Chesterfield Avenue  
Newhall  
Swadlincote  
DE11 0TR

Dear Mrs Weaver

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Newhall Community Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 June 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2010. 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 – 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Parker", written in a cursive style.

Christopher Parker  
Additional Inspector

## Annex

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

- Eradicate underachievement in all year groups in English, mathematics and science by:
  - improving the profile of teaching and learning so that a significant proportion is good or better by January 2012, through raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - improving the use of assessment so that work is planned more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and challenges all abilities
  - quickening the pace of learning in all lessons by improving the quality of teachers' questioning skills and making better use of time, so that pupils can apply and practise their skills
  - ensuring that basic skills are taught progressively so that prior learning is built upon in order to accelerate progress.
  
- Improve behaviour so that all pupils have responsible and positive attitudes and learn effectively by:
  - fostering greater motivation in lessons by ensuring that learning is interactive, investigative and enjoyable through activities that develop pupils' independent and collaborative skills
  - increasing pupils' involvement in their learning through much clearer explanations of what is to be learned; using success criteria to measure progress; achieving greater consistency in the quality of feedback – both orally and written – so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve further, and teachers are well informed to plan the next steps in learning
  - securing pupils' confidence in the school's ability to deal with their concerns, and involving them more in how to improve the quality of teaching and learning
  - providing separate small-group work for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties
  - providing training for lunchtime supervisors so that they are better able to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
  
- Strengthen the school's capacity for sustained improvement by:
  - appointing, in partnership with the local authority, a substantive headteacher as soon as possible
  - improving the rigour of self-evaluation and improvement planning through challenging, clear and measurable targets linked to behaviour and achievement
  - developing the role of senior and middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for raising pupils' achievement and improving their behaviour
  - developing the governing body's knowledge and understanding of provision and outcomes to enable it to effectively challenge leaders to secure improvement.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Newhall Community Junior School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 June 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, visited 10 lessons, scrutinised documents, and met with a group of pupils, the acting headteacher, the consultant headteacher, the English subject leader, the special educational needs coordinator, the local authority school improvement adviser and members of the governing body.

#### **Context**

The acting headteacher has taken control of the day-to-day management of the school, with the support of the consultant headteacher for one day each week. A substantive headteacher has been appointed. He will take up the post at the start of the new academic year. Two teachers were absent on sick leave at the time of the inspection.

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

The school's detailed assessments show that the increased progress seen on the last visit has been consolidated in most classes. However, the available data and the pupils' work both show that a considerable gap remains between the progress that the pupils are making where the teaching is most effective, and in Year 4 where the teaching has been disrupted. The school has taken steps to tackle the underachievement that is clearly evident in some of the Year 4 pupils' work by reassigning the acting deputy headteacher to one of the classes and providing a range of one-to-one and small-group support for those pupils who have fallen furthest behind.

The school's efforts to improve attainment in reading and writing are continuing to develop satisfactorily. The focus on guided reading has brought the benefit of better progress and greater confidence for pupils, for example, in reading their work aloud to the class. The content of the pupils' writing is improving satisfactorily. In Year 6, pupils were successfully using a good range of persuasive vocabulary to write advertising literature as part of their Young Enterprise project. The quality of handwriting and presentation are not given sufficient consideration throughout the school. Too many pupils do not hold their pencil properly or form their letters correctly, and this hampers the fluency of their writing.

The introduction of strategies to improve the pupils' concentration and perseverance are proving effective in most classrooms, but in some instances they are used too frequently and their impact is consequently lost.

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

- eradicate underachievement in all year groups in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Discussions with the pupils show that improvements in behaviour have been maintained. The weekly behaviour focus and positive rewards for good behaviour continue to pay dividends. The pupils say that the playground is a far more enjoyable place at break times and lunchtimes than it used to be, although they would like to have an area, away from the playground, for those who would prefer to sit quietly. The introduction of 'playground pals' and 'young leaders' has given older pupils the opportunity to take on greater responsibility. Steps are now being taken to appoint prefects and allow more pupils to take on responsibilities in school. The pupils welcome these developments. Behaviour in school is respectful and calm. The pupils say that lessons are rarely interrupted by misbehavior.

Attitudes to learning are, for the most part, positive. The teachers are helping the pupils to develop strategies to deal with various situations. For example, when they are stuck they now try resolving the situation themselves, rather than waiting for the teacher to come and do it for them. In most lessons the pupils listen carefully, but when the teaching lacks clarity those sitting on the periphery of classroom are not sufficiently engaged and their concentration wanders. A nurture programme is helping a small group of pupils to develop their self-esteem and extend their social skills.

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

- improve behaviour so that all pupils have responsible and positive attitudes and learn effectively – good.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The improved profile of the quality of teaching has been maintained, but elements of weak teaching have yet to be eradicated. There is still too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching to enable all pupils to make good progress in lessons. Some recent developments are yet to become established. For example, the teachers are increasingly involving pupils in assessing their own success in lessons. In some cases this is used well at key points in lessons to establish what the pupils have understood and what they still need to achieve. In others it forms part of the review at the end of a lesson, but there are occasions when self- and peer-assessments are not sufficiently focused to be of benefit to the pupils.

In many lessons the teaching guides the pupils systematically through a series of activities that develop their knowledge and skills so that they build on what they already know and are able to do. This was the case in a lesson where the teacher

successfully developed the pupils' ability to use clauses to extend and improve the structure of sentences. Conversely, in a lesson in another class in the same year group, the teacher was too keen to set a rapid pace of learning at the expense of a clear structure and effective sequence of activities. Consequently, the lesson lacked the coherence needed for the pupils to make satisfactory progress in their writing of dialogue.

Expectations of what the pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. Insufficient emphasis is placed on how well pupils present their work. Pupils are rarely reminded by their teachers about the standards of presentation that are expected. Although there are examples of writing displayed in classrooms which reflect the improved content of the pupils' work, the presentation is often not of a high enough standard.

While improvements in the rate of progress in reading have been achieved through a stronger programme of guided reading, the provision and display of books in classrooms is generally poor and does little to encourage the pupils to read for enjoyment.

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

The acting headteacher, supported by the consultant headteacher, has maintained the focus on improvement. The good improvements in behaviour seen at the last visit have become well established. Higher expectations of the pupils' behaviour have brought an orderly and calm working atmosphere to the school.

The building blocks for speedier and sustained improvement are now in place. The governing body has appointed a new headteacher, who is already attending meetings and familiarising himself with the priorities for improvement. In addition, the middle leadership is becoming stronger. For example, the English subject leader has worked with the local authority school improvement adviser and consultant to develop her management skills. This has considerably increased her confidence, not only to lead improvement activities but also to hold colleagues to account for the quality of their teaching of English.

The governing body is increasingly effective. Through a comprehensive timetable of visits and monitoring activities it is well informed about the actions taken to bring improvement, and their impact. A governor is now linked to each year group and has attended a meeting to find out whether the progress being made by pupils is accelerating. As a result of this type of activity the governing body is able to be far more searching in its dealings with the leaders and managers at all levels. Governors are requesting and receiving a range of reports and explanations that are putting them in a much stronger position to hold the school to account for its performance. Discussions with representatives of the governing body show not only that they

determined to oversee a marked improvement, but also that they relish the prospect of steering the school to a more successful future.

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

- strengthen the school's capacity for sustained improvement – good.

### **External support**

The school continues to receive a broad range of support from the local authority school improvement adviser, consultants, advanced skills teachers and lead teachers. This support is valued by the school and is having a positive impact; it is comprehensively assessed and its impact evaluated.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the standard of pupils' handwriting and significantly raise expectations of the manner in which they present their work so that it is routinely of high quality.