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24 June 2011

Mr S Bramwell  
Executive Headteacher  
Dukesgate Primary School  
Earlesdon Crescent  
Little Hulton  
Salford  
Greater Manchester  
M38 9HF

Dear Mr Bramwell,

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

Following my visit to your school on 21 and 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 fourth 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 - satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - good

Newly Qualified Teachers may only be appointed with the agreement of the lead inspector.

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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 10 Dec 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 fourth monitoring inspection from 21 June to 22 June 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector looked at the school's work, observed eight lessons, scrutinised documents and met with nominated staff, a group of pupils, a group of parents and carers, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also met with an external consultant, conducted learning walks within the school and briefly visited a number of learning activities.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit the headteacher has left the school. A new executive headteacher and a head of school have been appointed on a temporary basis as part of a contract with a National Support School in a nearby local authority. A new member of staff has been appointed on a temporary contract. At the time of the monitoring visit, one class was taught by a teacher from the partner school.

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

Pupils' attainment is low but is starting to rise quickly. The progress made by pupils in most lessons observed was good. This stronger progress is clearly evident at Key Stages 1 and 2 but less so in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, provisional data from teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 indicate that while results in writing have improved when compared to 2010 those in reading and in mathematics have dipped. At the time of the monitoring visit, no provisional results for the statutory assessments for pupils in Year 6 were yet available but inspection evidence shows that pupils in this year group are making accelerated progress in their learning and catching up on past underachievement. The attainment of these pupils is higher in English than in mathematics. Few pupils are working consistently at the higher Level 5, especially in writing and mathematics.

School data based on teacher assessments and the results of end of year examinations show that an increasing number of pupils are making better progress in their learning, although this is not yet consistently the case across all year groups or in all subjects. Progress overall is stronger in English than in mathematics. The school has begun to address shortcomings in pupils' basic skills and knowledge, such as number bonds, times tables and key spellings.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also making good progress. This is due to improvements in teaching, better matching of work to their needs and increased support by additional adults in classrooms. Since the last monitoring visit, the coordination of this area of the school's work has been provided effectively by two external consultants who have worked closely with school staff. They have ensured that specialist support

agencies are now fully involved with the school. The special educational needs register has taken new assessment data into account and has been fully updated. It helpfully identifies pupils who are new to the register. Pupils who have been removed from it, because they have made enough progress in their learning, are clearly indicated and monitored. Meetings between senior leaders and teachers to review the learning of all pupils now discuss as a matter of routine, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These discussions have increased professional dialogue and understanding about special educational needs issues and made teachers more accountable for the academic progress of these pupils. Following an audit of the skills of support staff, their deployment has been reviewed so that their skills are more effectively exploited. There is a greater level of discussion between teachers and support staff about the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Intervention strategies and how pupils are grouped, have also been reviewed and the withdrawal of pupils from core subject lessons has been suitably reduced. A number of these strategies have been carefully refocused so that they are linked closely to the work studied in class by pupils receiving support.

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

- 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 – good

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' attendance has improved slightly on that recorded in 2010. Since the beginning of the last term, it has improved further, partly due to helpful changes to school policies about attendance. Analysis by the school shows that attendance is rising in most year groups but has fallen in two of them. Persistent absence is being closely monitored. However, too many pupils arrive late for the start of the school day. Behaviour has improved and exclusions of pupils have been strongly reduced. Contributing to this is a more consistent approach by the school's leaders to instances of misbehaviour. Pupils spoken to during the inspection considered the new approach to be both firm and fair and that it, and more interesting and challenging work, had improved behaviour.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The proportion of teaching that is good has improved strongly since the previous monitoring visit. This is partly due to the recruitment of additional effective teachers but also to a much stronger focus by school leaders on improving teaching. A new agreed teaching and learning policy has been drawn up. This details clearly the features of good and outstanding teaching and these have been discussed at length with staff. Consequently, teachers are much more aware of what good and better teaching looks like. School leaders have carried out joint observations of teaching and provided succinct, supportive and useful feedback to staff. As such, teachers are focusing more on the progress made by pupils in lessons and their

expectations of the amount of work pupils can accomplish are higher. However, in some lessons, there remains scope for the most able pupils to be more fully challenged. The quality of marking has improved. More marking is providing pupils with guidance on how to improve their work. This developmental guidance is more prominent in English and mathematics than in other subjects. There remain inconsistencies in how pupils acknowledge and respond to this useful feedback.

Where teaching was good, expectations were high, learning objectives were explained well, the pace of teaching was fast and lessons were well resourced. Appropriate demands were made of pupils about the amount of work they had to complete. Inattention was dealt with promptly and teachers were less accepting of untidy, or too little, work. Pupils were more involved in their learning but some opportunities for involvement were not exploited. Where teaching was satisfactory, time was not always well used, not all pupils were fully on-task and the pace of learning was not fast enough. While pupils' understanding of what they had to do was checked, misunderstandings were not always fully followed up. Resources were not always stimulating or used well. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. They settle more quickly to their work, are more attentive and listen more closely. Most pupils know the National Curriculum levels at which they are working in the core subjects and the levels at which they are aiming.

Satisfactory progress has been made on developing the curriculum. There is a stronger focus on the basic skills of English and mathematics. For example, timetables have been changed in order to provide more teaching time for English and mathematics. Discrete 'reading comprehension' and 'extended writing' hours have been introduced to strengthen pupils' reading skills and to give them more opportunities to write at length. A more uniform approach to the teaching of guided reading has been introduced. The handwriting scheme has now been implemented and careful thought has been given to how it can be taught and applied consistently across the school. Some activities, which added little to pupils' learning, have been ended. The homework policy has been applied more consistently and more is now being completed. There is evidence of pupils making more use of their information and communications technology (ICT) skills for writing. Some progress has been made in enabling pupils to apply their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects, although in some of this work there is an overreliance on worksheets. Good opportunities have been taken to display pupils' written work, but few displays are interactive or explain to pupils what it is that makes such work good.

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

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

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

Since taking up their posts, the executive headteacher and the head of school have provided strong leadership and clear direction. They have achieved much in a short space of time. Their clear vision for the school has created a stronger sense of teamwork and common purpose amongst staff and raised morale. Staff have worked hard to implement initiatives.

The leadership team moved quickly and resolutely to establish high expectations amongst staff and pupils and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff meetings have focused on how teaching, and particularly the progress of pupils, can be improved. Teachers' planning and pupils' work have been carefully checked and appropriate, unambiguous but supportive feedback given on how these can be made better. Clear and rigorous procedures for the monitoring of teaching have been implemented. Measures to remedy weaker teaching have been put in place.

The leadership team rapidly established an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A good quality development plan has been drawn up in response to these findings and to additional priorities. The use of assessment information has been refined and much time has been spent ensuring that staff become more adept in its interpretation and use.

A new management structure has been agreed with the supportive and challenging IEB. Key appointments of new staff have been made for the new academic year. However, the leadership of subjects is underdeveloped. Available finances are more rigorously controlled and these have been used effectively to improve learning, for example, by purchasing reading books for more-able pupils. Good use has been made of the expertise available at the partner school.

## **External support**

The local authority has continued to provide good support for the school. In collaboration with the Greater Manchester Challenge, it organised the appointment of the new leadership team. It has funded several consultants that have worked in the school, including one who has identified a number of areas for development within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Since the appointment of the leadership team, the local authority has appropriately reduced its direct involvement in the school, but still monitors its progress closely and carries out checks on teaching. The local authority and the Greater Manchester Challenge have also provided assistance to the school on the issue of special educational needs. In addition to the growing links with its new partner school, the school has also benefitted from links with another school in a nearby local authority and from a local leader of education.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Develop the capacity of subject leaders to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.