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17 October 2011

Mrs S Everson  
Headteacher  
Hilderthorpe Primary School  
Shaftesbury Road  
Bridlington  
East Yorkshire  
YO15 3PP

Dear Mrs Everson

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

Following my visit with Kathryn Dodd, additional inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 October 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2011. 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

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 the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

September 2011



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on May 2011**

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, particularly that of boys in Years 5 and 6, by:
  - providing more opportunities to learn through undertaking practical and investigative activities
  - providing reading materials and learning resources that stimulate boys' interest
  - giving pupils more opportunities to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of contexts
  - using information and communication technology extensively, both as a teaching aid and as a visual learning resource.
  
- Improve pupils' behaviour and conduct outside lessons by:
  - adopting a consistent approach to behaviour management to ensure that pupils move about the school in a safe and orderly manner and with respect for the safety and welfare of other pupils and adults
  - ensuring that pupils follow school rules
  - ensuring that pupils' ideas for improving behaviour are considered when drawing up strategies
  - ensuring that adults check and deal appropriately with every instance of inappropriate behaviour
  - helping pupils to learn self-discipline and take responsibility for their actions eradicating bullying, name-calling, racist incidents and homophobic comments.
  
- Ensure arrangements for safeguarding are robust and that pupils receive sufficient support to enable them to keep themselves safe.
  
- Improve pupils' attendance by:
  - following up more rigorously persistent and occasional absenteeism
  - working more closely with parents and carers to reduce the number of holidays taken in term-time
  - offering a range of short-term incentives to promote good attendance.
  
- Improve the quality of individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs by:
  - improving teachers' record-keeping
  - ensuring that individual education plans have specific targets accurately matched to pupils' learning needs

- involving parents, carers and pupils in agreeing targets in order to help pupils make the next small steps in their learning and to keep parents and carers fully informed of their children's progress
- checking and reviewing provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities more often so that targets are changed when needed.

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

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection from 18 and 19 October 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, including those related to safeguarding children, and met with the senior management team, the special educational needs coordinator, the school's nurture group leader, the Chair of the Governing Body, groups of pupils, parents and carers, the executive headteacher, a local authority appointed governor, and representatives from the local authority responsible for school improvement and health and safety. Owing to inspectors having to refocus the monitoring inspection on the first day to investigate emerging concerns relating to the school's arrangements for safeguarding children, which are reported below, just six lessons were observed.

#### **Context**

Since the inspection of May 2012, which placed the school into special measures, there have been a number of significant additions to staffing and the governing body. Funding from the local authority has secured the services of a serving headteacher to act as executive headteacher for two days per week. This funding has also allowed the appointment, on a temporary basis, of an additional deputy headteacher. In addition, the school has appointed an education welfare officer to focus on attendance for the equivalent of one day per week. Additional members of the governing body have been appointed by the local authority. There have also been a number of changes to the school environment, including the introduction of a traffic management system and the removal of previous uncovered ponds.

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

Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics rose in 2011. While this was a welcome improvement, attainment remains low. In particular, standards of writing observed in lessons and in pupils' work are low. Even in the older classes, punctuation and spelling are not consistently used well and not always corrected by teachers even though they appear as targets in the front of pupils' books.

Under the direction of the executive headteacher, there has been a determined focus to provide opportunities for pupils to learn through investigative activities and for them to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of contexts. Pupils are doing these things more often now, with boys as involved as girls, although it is too early to assess the impact of this work. Nevertheless, the satisfactory progress being made by pupils in their learning noted in May 2011 was observed in this inspection. It was only in this monitoring inspection, though, that the permanent school leaders appreciated this rate of progress will lead to no better than low attainment in the future.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, particularly that of boys in Years 5 and 6 – satisfactory

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils, parents and carers spoken with during this visit were generally of the view that behaviour has improved since the inspection of May 2011 and acknowledge that more is still to be done. Pupils generally behave satisfactorily in class and are very polite around the corridors, holding doors open and not forgetting to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Outside at break time and at lunchtime, the large majority were observed playing happily. A few, though, remain boisterous while running around or playing football and, when they line up, a few push and shove or take too long to respond to the instructions of adults. Pupils talk positively about the 'good to be green' initiative for promoting good behaviour. This initiative was not, however, observed by inspectors in any of the lessons seen and leaders are not checking to see if their agreed policy is being put into place consistently.

Pupils attend school on a more-regular basis. This is the result of focused work undertaken by the designated member of staff and the education welfare officer, and the regular contact made with parents and carers. The number of pupils persistently absent has reduced significantly and, had it not been for a bout of recent illness, the school's target for this term would have been reached. Pupils respond well to the initiatives and rewards put into place and enjoy watching how well their class is performing in the 'boat race chart'.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Improve pupils' behaviour and conduct outside lessons – satisfactory
- Improve pupils' attendance – good

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Under the direction of the executive headteacher, this term the staff have focused on strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. Frequent and regular monitoring has improved consistency. Records highlight more elements that are good, for example the increasingly effective use of information and communication technology, marking that includes the next steps to take and the linking of learning to other subjects. Inspection evidence confirms this view, although it also highlights that pupils' targets, such as those to improve written work, are not referred to consistently.

Improvements have been made to the quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have statements of special educational needs so that they are now clearer, more focused and involve parents and carers more. This

work, undertaken by the special educational needs coordinator, has been extended to improve the quality of individual education plans for pupils at School Action Plus of the special needs register but has not extended to those for pupils identified for School Action.

Immediately following the inspection of May 2011, the local authority and school put into place a number of measures to improve arrangements for safeguarding children, including making safe previously accessible ponds and adopting a system for managing traffic on the school site. The school has benefited from very clear advice from the local authority in relation to health and safety and risk assessment. It is of great concern that school leaders have not ensured this advice has been personalised to the school's context or acted upon. The weekly checks, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which were believed to be completed for all classes, were not done. Likewise, a set of generic risk assessments were used by teachers for a recent educational visit with no attempt to make the assessments personal and relevant to the group of pupils. In addition, these assessments were signed by staff and approved even though they included actions that were not completed and included a reference to a non-existent child. Therefore they were not fit for purpose and it is this lack of awareness and rigour by senior leaders that has resulted in insufficient progress being made in ensuring pupils are kept safe. The potential risks as a result of non-compliance in these respects are most apparent. This lack of rigour is also evident in the way families are not always informed that their child had been subject to racist comments, and telephone conversations with other agencies regarding pupils considered to be vulnerable are not always routinely recorded.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Ensure arrangements for safeguarding are robust and that pupils receive sufficient support to enable them to keep themselves safe – inadequate
- Improve the quality of individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs – satisfactory

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

The substantive leaders are heavily reliant on external support. They are not demonstrating they have strengthened their capacity to make improvements. The headteacher has not insisted on frequent monitoring and, as a result, staff lack guidance and this is holding back the potential for improvements. The deputy headteachers are not sufficiently involved in identifying strengths and weaknesses, or identifying potential solutions. By contrast, staff have responded more positively to the coaching and clear expectations of the executive headteacher in work relating to learning and teaching.

Other than that provided by the local authority, insufficient information is being provided to the governing body. This means it cannot hold the school to account with any rigour.

Governors, for example, are not routinely advised of any homophobic or racist incidents. The governing body has begun to take steps to rectify this weakness, such as a local authority appointed governor putting into place a more rigorous system for demanding evidence from school leaders.

Until this inspection, senior leaders have not had a clear view about the accuracy of assessments undertaken by teachers or what constitutes accelerated progress. This hinders the setting of challenging targets. Leaders now acknowledge that teachers' confidence in assessing pupils in terms of National Curriculum levels is developing but further training is required to ensure they are reliably accurate.

The confidence of parents and carers in the school's leadership has weakened. Although the group of parents and carers spoken with formally during the inspection recognised improvements in behaviour and appreciated the efforts of the headteacher, some of the small number of other parents and carers spoken with on the playground were less positive. A recent questionnaire conducted by the school revealed that nearly one quarter of parents and carers did not think the school was well led and managed. Part of the concern is that parents and carers are not always informed of their child's progress. For example, they are not always informed of incidents that occur, such as the very few examples of name-calling of a racist nature. In addition, parents and carers of pupils identified for School Action have not yet been informed of their child's targets. In part, this is because the individual education plans remain too variable in quality, are not reviewed with sufficient rigour and learning in lessons is not always related to them.

### **External support**

The support and challenge from the local authority has been strong and robust. Its action plan is fit for purpose and is clear in the success to be achieved. The local authority provides the school with sufficient resources in terms of time, finance and personnel. Its monitoring is frequent and regular. Where interventions have been direct, improvements have followed. In short, the improvements made so far have been the result of local authority planning, actions and funding of additional staff, such as the executive headteacher.

### **Priorities for further improvement:**

- Ensure that for each educational visit a bespoke risk assessment is in place.