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Mrs Deborah Hannaford  
Headteacher  
Millfield Primary School  
Grange Lane  
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Dear Mrs Hannaford

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

Following my visit to your school on 16 November 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 February 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.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed after discussion with HMI.

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 Cambridgeshire.

Yours sincerely

Alan Alder  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2011**

- Raise attainment, particularly for the most able pupils in English and mathematics across Years 1 to 6, by:
  - providing more opportunities for extended writing, especially in Key Stage 1
  - using demonstrations to show pupils how to organise their text into paragraphs that use a range of sentence structures and punctuation marks
  - giving pupils opportunities to apply their mathematical skills by doing more problem solving and investigative work.
  
- Ensure that the large majority of teaching is good or better by:
  - matching provision closely to the individual needs of pupils
  - ensuring introductions are brisk and actively involve pupils in their learning
  - improving the use of pupils' targets in lessons to make learning more tailored to individuals
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to assess their own work.
  
- Strengthen the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that weaknesses are tackled robustly and staff have clear direction to enable them to play their full part in improving the quality of provision.
  
- Improve attendance through:
  - analysing attendance data more rigorously in order to target actions effectively
  - working even more closely with families whose children do not attend on a regular enough basis.

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

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 16 November 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other teachers with responsibilities, a group of pupils, a representative from the local authority (LA), and the Chair of the Governing Body.

#### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the new headteacher has joined the school, along with a new deputy headteacher. A new literacy coordinator also took up his post at the beginning of this term, replacing a teacher who left at the end of the summer term. In addition, the team leader for Years 1 and 2 has left, along with a teacher of Year 4 and three temporary teachers, two of whom taught in Reception. Some teachers, on short-term contracts, have been appointed until more permanent appointments are made. One new teacher will join the school on a permanent basis in January.

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

The provisional results from the 2011 national assessments have now been published. They show a good improvement in the proportion achieving the expected Level 4 at the end of Year 6 in English, but there was a substantial drop in mathematics. Standards overall remain low. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 rose in mathematics and, particularly strongly, in English. The assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 show little change and standards remain low. Evidence from the school's own assessments for this term suggests a mixed picture, with mathematics making the smallest gains. Pupils' alacrity with number bonds is underdeveloped and this hinders them when doing calculations. The work in pupils' books shows some improvement, though it is variable and is better in Key Stage 1. There are still too many weaknesses in pupils' spelling and handwriting. Pupils' organisation of writing into sentences is improving, however.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- raise attainment, particularly for the most able pupils in English and mathematics across Years 1 to 6 – inadequate.

#### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' behaviour continues to improve. Pupils say there is little poor behaviour, and observations during the inspection confirm this. Pupils also report that a strong anti-bullying campaign, led by the headteacher, has been successful. Attendance has improved. The school's leaders are effective in making the importance of good attendance clear to both pupils and parents. For the period from the beginning of term to the week of the inspection it was 95.5%, compared with 94.4% for the same period a year ago. The attendance of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with this figure and this represents a strong improvement on a year ago. The attendance of the small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language remains low.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve attendance – good.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Ten lessons were observed. Of these, the quality of teaching and learning were judged as good in two lessons and the rest was satisfactory, although in three lessons, the teaching was barely satisfactory. There were no inadequate lessons observed. This is an improvement on the last visit, when, in almost half the lessons, the teaching was inadequate or barely satisfactory. The proportion is now around one third, but this, along with the small proportion of good teaching, is not sufficient to compensate for pupils' past underachievement and low standards. Nevertheless, lessons now regularly contain more positive features than they did. What pupils are expected to learn is both clearer and more realistic than previously. Pupils are more aware of what they should be learning. The practice of matching work to pupils' abilities is improving, although plans for it are not widely enough implemented. Challenging questions are not used consistently enough for the higher attaining pupils.

Pupils' spelling is very weak and they are not receiving enough advice on how to improve it. The policy of placing more emphasis on the teaching of phonics throughout the school is having an impact, but older pupils need more immediate support with spellings. There are, for example, several opportunities during the week which could be used for this but which are not used for that purpose.

The monitoring of pupils' work during lessons is sometimes insufficient. In several lessons observed, there were pupils who had not understood the work and so, when they worked independently, were not able to make progress. This was not detected by the teacher, so pupils gained little from the work. In one lesson in which pupils were taught phonics, there were important inaccuracies in their pronunciation. This went uncorrected by the teacher, who indeed also pronounced some phonemes inaccurately.

One of the priorities of the school is to improve pupils' handwriting. However, their books too often do not show improvement, despite the fact that they now have opportunities to practise. The extent to which pupils join their writing remain far too little. The marking of books is nevertheless improving. There are generally much clearer, and many more, suggestions for how pupils can improve their work.

The curriculum has improved. It now responds better to pupils' strengths and weaknesses, for example through the formal teaching of handwriting. Standard ways of tackling calculations in mathematics have been agreed and implemented. It is clear that there is now more emphasis on calculations. However, there are still too few opportunities for investigative work.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that the large majority of teaching is good or better – satisfactory.

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

The new headteacher has established herself in her role quickly. She has dealt decisively with some difficult issues, relating to the recruitment of staff, and this has enabled the school to remain fully staffed. The arrival of the new headteacher, deputy headteacher and literacy coordinator is leading to a range of important developments. These demonstrate good strategic planning. A number of relevant initiatives have been introduced. However, although strategies are being implemented, the monitoring of their impact on learning has not led to enough recognition of the fact that some, the improvement of handwriting for example, are not having sufficient impact. Much work is being taken to bring about improvements to pupils' literacy. There is evidence of there being more opportunities for extended writing, for example. The quality of teaching has been regularly monitored, and training, for example that provided by the LA, has been given so that it improves. While this is gradually reducing the proportion of weak teaching, it has not improved the proportion of good or better teaching and learning in lessons across the school.

A very well designed assessment system has been introduced. It compares the standards that pupils have reached with what is expected for their age. This is an important step, although the accuracy of the assessments is not always reliable. There are now daily guided reading sessions. While these show some good practice, they are not used enough to assess and record where pupils have difficulties so that they can be helped where necessary and improvements monitored.

In the assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2011, the proportion of girls reaching the expected standard in mathematics was well below that of boys. There has not been

the necessary analysis and follow-up to this to check if teaching approaches need to be modified.

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

- strengthen the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that weaknesses are tackled robustly and staff have clear direction to enable them to play their full part in improving the quality of provision – satisfactory.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing valued support in the development of teaching. This is having some impact, although there remains much to be done.