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26 January 2012

Mrs S Ramsay  
Headteacher  
Eaton Valley Primary School  
Dagger Lane  
West Bromwich  
B71 4BU

Dear Mrs Ramsay

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Eaton Valley Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 24–25 January 2012, 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 March 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 – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

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 Sandwell.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress across the school by:
  - monitoring pupils' progress rigorously by establishing clear assessment and tracking systems
  - ensuring that assessment data and progress tracking are used more effectively to ensure that all groups of pupils make good gains in their learning
  - ensuring that all pupils are set clear, individual targets for improvement in reading and mathematics, similar to those in writing, so they know what they are aiming to achieve
  - developing pupils' use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the range of curriculum subjects.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - developing teachers' use of assessment, including the use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to identify the next steps in learning
  - developing teachers' awareness of the learning needs of different groups of pupils so that lesson planning takes full account of the range of abilities in each class
  - providing increased challenge for more-able pupils so that they achieve in line with their capabilities
  - helping pupils to develop independent learning skills.
  
- Strengthen the leadership, management and governance of the school by:
  - ensuring that all middle and subject leaders develop fully their skills in monitoring, data analysis and evaluation
  - ensuring that the governing body meets in full its statutory duties by monitoring, reviewing, updating and approving all required policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding
  - making readily available to parents and carers information on all relevant policies and procedures relating to child protection.
  
- Work with pupils, parents, carers and the education welfare officer to reduce unauthorised absence and improve attendance to the school's target of at least 94%.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Eaton Valley Primary School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 24-25 January 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher of the partner school and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

The teacher appointed to take responsibility for Key Stage 1 and numeracy commenced her duties at the start of January 2012. There are currently two teachers absent on maternity leave and two teachers absent through illness.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The school's tracking information and pupils' work in books show that the progress of all groups of pupils continues to accelerate. Consequently, although pupils' attainment remains low throughout the school, it is improving. Because of gaps in pupils' basic literacy skills such as punctuation, pupils' attainment in writing is considerably lower than in reading and mathematics.

Despite the improving picture overall, pupils' progress remains inconsistent. For example, over the past term, pupils made outstanding progress in some classes and inadequate progress in others. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are making progress which is at least in line with that of other groups of pupils in the school.

These improvements are mainly due to improved teaching, more rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and higher expectations. More accurate assessments mean that leaders now track pupils' progress more effectively and identify those pupils not making expected progress so that additional support can be provided. Regular discussions between senior leaders and teachers about pupils' achievement have increased teachers' expectations of all pupils.

All pupils have targets for improvement and these are usually related to the school's identified areas of concern, such as punctuation in writing and mental calculations in mathematics. However, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities in lessons to reinforce the skills identified in the targets.

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

- raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress across the school – satisfactory.

### **The quality of teaching**

The new appointment, staff training and more rigorous monitoring by senior leaders have improved the quality of teaching throughout the school. Strong relationships between teachers and pupils help promote a positive climate for learning in lessons. Teaching assistants play an increasingly important role in lessons, especially guiding the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers' increased knowledge of the use of assessment information is reflected in lesson plans which now more accurately address the needs of the full range of abilities in the class. However, in many lessons, the work given to the more-able pupils is still too easy. In most lessons, teachers are still not clear enough about what they want pupils to learn, do not identify pupils' next steps in learning and do not check regularly enough on pupils' understanding. This is the main reason why there is not a greater proportion of good and outstanding teaching. In some classes, the presentation of pupils' work in books is poor.

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

- improve the quality of teaching – satisfactory.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The strategies to raise pupils' attendance continue to have a positive impact. Parents and carers are often reminded of the importance of ensuring that their children attend regularly, and rewards are given to pupils for full termly attendance. Each class has its own attendance target and teachers continue to stress the importance of pupils coming to school as often as possible. The governing body has astutely reworded some of the attendance policies to reflect the high profile that regular attendance now has in the school. Regular monitoring and analysis of the attendance of groups of pupils and individuals help ensure that leaders keep a careful check on attendance patterns. The attendance officer provides effective support, guidance and advice to the school and to families where appropriate. The school's monitoring information shows that the attendance rate continues to improve and unauthorised absence continues to decrease. Overall attendance for the autumn term 2011 rose to 93.4%. However, the attendance of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, remains at about 91%.

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

- work with pupils, parents, carers and the education welfare officer to reduce unauthorised absence and improve attendance to the school's target of at least 94% - satisfactory.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The headteacher's relentless determination to improve the quality of teaching and add greater rigour to the monitoring of pupils' progress has been central to all improvements made. The deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and middle leaders are taking increasingly important roles in driving improvement. The appointment of a teacher new to the school to lead mathematics and Key Stage 1 has continued to strengthen the school's leadership and management. The role of the teacher with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is now considerably stronger. She rigorously tracks pupils' progress, organises support programmes and manages support staff. Senior leaders' determination to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are accurate is helping to ensure that the school's self-evaluation is more rigorous and plans for improvement are directed more sharply at the most important areas.

Since the last monitoring inspection, leaders have begun to focus lesson observations on how clear teachers are about what they want pupils to learn, the identification of pupils' next steps in learning and the checks teachers make on pupils' understanding. However, this is still not undertaken with enough focus and rigour.

The governing body continues to improve its role in holding the school to account. The Chair of the Governing Body has led governor training on how to interpret pupils' progress data. Governors are far more involved in visiting classes and discussing with staff many aspects of provision and pupils' outcomes. Child protection and safeguarding policies are widely available to parents and carers.

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

- strengthen the leadership, management and governance of the school – good.

### **External support**

Senior leaders value the support from the local authority. They are especially grateful for the guidance given by the school improvement adviser and the headteacher and staff of the partner school.