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1 March 2013

Linda Adams  
Executive Headteacher  
Lansdowne School  
Argyll Close  
Dalyell Road  
London  
SW9 9QL

Dear Ms Adams

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Lansdowne School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 February 2013, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2012. 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Lambeth.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012**

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by fully responding to the conclusions of the strategic review of personnel, roles and responsibilities in order to build capacity and bring about improvements in the outcomes for pupils.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers always:
  - use a wide range of approaches and strategies to fully motivate all pupils
  - clearly identify in their planning the needs of individual pupils and how they will be challenged, and in lessons use this information to drive forward pupils' learning
  - consistently use the newly developed behaviour management systems and strategies.
  
- Improve pupils' communication skills by:
  - formalising and applying a clear policy for teachers' use of signing and pictorial strategies across the curriculum
  - ensuring that reading sessions at the start of the day are used consistently well
  - addressing the weaknesses older pupils have in the methods and strategies they use to decode and synthesise words.
  
- Ensure there is greater accuracy in the assessments teachers make about pupils' progress.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Lansdowne School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 27 and 28 February 2013**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work including 10 lessons, most of which were visited with the executive headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers. A series of short visits were made to reading sessions in each of the ten classes at the start of the day. In total, 12 teachers were observed. The inspector scrutinised documents, such as lesson planning, monitoring records and progress tracking as well as records of interim executive board meetings and local authority visits. He held meetings with the executive headteacher, members of the leadership team, a representative from the local authority and all members of the interim executive board. He also held a telephone discussion with the local authority's school improvement adviser.

#### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring visit, one member of teaching staff has left the school. The school has almost completed the necessary processes to make permanent appointments for the few vacancies which remain staffed by long-term agency teachers. The executive headteacher and membership of the interim executive board remain unchanged.

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

Pupils' rates of progress continue to improve strongly. The school's tracking systems are now better established and show that pupils' progress is accelerating in most subjects. Improvements in progress in mathematics are less rapid than in English because the quality of teaching has not improved consistently in mathematics.

The reading and literacy skills of many pupils are developing rapidly because teaching in the daily reading lessons is consistently well planned. Older pupils' reading and spelling skills are improving well because planning focuses more clearly on their individual needs. More frequent and accurate monitoring of improvements in Year 7 pupils' reading ages is especially effective in helping teachers to plan the next steps in learning for individuals and small groups.

The use of sign and symbol supported communication continues to improve well. Symbol supported text is now used more selectively as part of the resources produced by teachers when planning work that meets pupils' individual needs. This demonstrates that teachers are becoming increasingly more proficient at using assessment information effectively to identify what pupils need to do to improve their learning.

Staff are becoming more confident in using signs to support their verbal communication in lessons. Older pupils are often more self-conscious about signing than those in younger year groups and participate less enthusiastically in activities, such as the signing and signing assembly. Nevertheless, younger pupils are receiving more encouragement to sign, particularly through their involvement in the expertly led choir.

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

- Improve pupils' communication skills – good.

### **The quality of teaching**

The improvement in consistency in teachers' preparation and delivery of lessons has been sustained since the previous monitoring visit. This has been achieved through regular training, coaching and mentoring. Teachers now use established routines and approaches to teaching so that pupils know what to expect during each lesson. For example, the 'FRESH' rules are becoming well understood by pupils as a result of an appropriately brief focus on them during each lesson. As a result, classrooms are much calmer and pupils are more motivated and better focused on learning.

The use of assessment has improved well because teachers now have access to accurate and meaningful data about pupils' learning and progress in their subjects. Planning takes better account of individual pupils' needs because teachers now evaluate how successfully their teaching has helped pupils' learning to move on. In the most effective planning, teachers use their evaluations to set work that focuses on addressing identified areas of weakness both for individuals and small groups of pupils.

The quality of planning for how additional adults in the classroom will be directed to support pupils' learning remains inconsistent across the school. In lessons where teachers direct additional adults well, pupils have more regular opportunities to work independently and their learning is reinforced more effectively. At the moment, additional adults do not have access to a coaching and mentoring programme that is in place and working successfully for teachers. As a result, their skills are not improving as rapidly as those of the teaching staff.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.
- Ensure there is greater accuracy in the assessments teachers make about pupils' progress – good.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' engagement in lessons continues to improve well. They are motivated to succeed because the work that they are asked to do is increasingly well matched to their abilities. They now show a more thorough understanding of the school's expectations of their behaviour because the rules are discussed and referred to regularly in lessons.

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

School leaders continue to be highly focused on learning and actively committed to improving the quality of teaching at the school. Coaching and mentoring support remains in place for most members of staff to ensure that the improvements in teaching quality achieved so far are maintained and built upon. This is ensuring that the proportion of teaching that is of a good or better standard continues to increase.

The interim executive board continues to provide good support for the school. Members of the board have been able to start to hold school leaders to account for pupils' learning and progress using assessment information from the school's improved progress tracking systems. They have provided particularly useful support to the executive headteacher which has helped her to focus on leading the development of the school.

The interim executive board has made appropriate plans to continue its support for the school while further changes are made. These include the building of a new school on the site as well as possible changes to the school's designation following a local authority review of special educational needs provision in the area. Members demonstrate awareness of the need for planning and managing the transition to a conventional governing body in due course.

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

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by fully responding to the conclusions of the strategic review of personnel, roles and responsibilities in order to build capacity and bring about improvements in the outcomes for pupils – good.

## **External support**

The local authority and the federation partnership school continue to provide good support. Regular monitoring by local authority advisers provides school leaders with external validation of their own judgements about the quality of teaching. Links with other schools, including the federation partnership school, continue to provide valuable opportunities for the school's teachers who have mainstream school backgrounds to improve their knowledge of special educational needs.