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19 May 2010

Mrs M Harrison  
Headteacher  
Dukesgate Primary School  
Earlsdon Crescent  
Little Hulton  
Salford  
Greater Manchester  
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Dear Mrs Harrison

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Dukesgate Primary School

Following my visit with Kath Harris, additional inspector to your school on 17 and 18 May 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 2009. 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Salford local authority.

Yours sincerely

Michael McIlroy  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Dukesgate Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 May 2010

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, nominated staff, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority who is also the School's Improvement Partner. Inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed a number of small teaching groups.

## Context

Since the school was placed into special measures a new headteacher has taken up post. One teacher has left the school and one has joined it. A new Chair of the Governing Body has recently been appointed.

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

In 2009, the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 2 was well below average. Inspection evidence and school assessment information indicate that pupils' attainment remains below average. The school's data suggest that pupils are performing more strongly in mathematics than in English. Inspection evidence indicates that the progress made by pupils in most lessons observed was satisfactory and that some was inadequate. Consequently, the progress made by pupils is not yet good enough to redress past underachievement. In Key Stage 1, provisional results from recent national assessments indicate that pupils' attainment is slightly below last year's results in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's data suggest that no pupils have attained the higher Level 3 grade in reading and writing and that very few attained this level in mathematics.

Following the previous inspection, the school was required to increase the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A new inclusion manager has been appointed and action plans have been drawn up. Policies have been updated. The list of pupils with special educational needs has been reviewed and is now more accurate. As a result, the school and class teachers have a much clearer understanding of which pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils have been assessed in reading, writing and mathematics and these results are recorded on a new tracking system. Consequently, teachers are more knowledgeable about these pupils' needs and can plan work and support more effectively for them. The progress of these pupils is regularly reviewed at meetings between the headteacher and class teachers. The school's assessments indicate that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are now starting to make better progress in their learning.

The new tracking system has been suitably used to direct new intervention strategies. For example, a number of pupils whose understanding of the sounds letters make was underdeveloped have received appropriate support which has improved their understanding. Learning mentors are also working with pupils whose behaviour has given cause for concern. A new style of individual education plan has also been introduced which is more child and parent friendly. Pupils are now appropriately involved in the drawing up of these plans. The school has also worked hard to successfully increase the involvement of parents in this process.

Progress since being subject to special measures:

- 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 – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The attendance of pupils in the last academic year was below average but broadly in line with similar schools. Data provided by the school suggest that since the start of this academic year, it has risen and now stands at 93.5%. Most pupils behave satisfactorily in class. However, there is some low level disruption and off-task behaviour when pupils are not fully supervised. This behaviour is not always checked swiftly or effectively enough and slows the rate of learning. Pupils generally behave well in the playground, although some would benefit from being reminded about the school's rules on playground safety. In the previous term, the number of fixed-term exclusions was high. However, this needs to be seen in the context of the school taking a more robust and consistent approach to the management of behaviour. Pupils spoken to during the monitoring visit confirmed that behaviour had improved markedly since the last inspection.

The effectiveness of provision

The school has made slow progress in raising the proportion of teaching that is good or better. Although some good teaching was observed, too much remains satisfactory and the proportion of inadequate teaching is too high. Contributing factors to this are ineffective arrangements to ensure that high quality planning is available to temporary teachers and a lack of adherence to timetables. These weaknesses also prevent continuity in learning. Where teaching was inadequate, planning was weak, resources were not always well prepared and expectations of what was required of pupils were not clearly spelt out. Pupils who were inattentive or distracted from their work were not dealt with quickly enough. Consequently, pupils in these lessons did not make enough progress in their learning. Where teaching was good, expectations of behaviour were high, lesson objectives were carefully explained to pupils and there was a good balance between teacher-directed work and independent work by pupils.

Common weaknesses in teaching included too much teacher talk and a slow pace of learning. Too often, teachers did not make clear to pupils what amount and quality of written work was expected of them and when it should be completed by. Time was not always well used. For example, some plenary sessions were too short which meant that key learning points could not be revised and embedded and that pupils' understanding of new concepts could not be fully assessed. In some lessons, pupils were asked to undertake tasks, such as the cutting out of shapes or pictures, which slowed the pace of learning and which added little to their knowledge and understanding. In other lessons, teachers did usefully refer back to learning objectives during the lesson which reinforced pupils' understanding, reminded them of their goals and ensured that they were focused on their tasks. There was some use of electronic whiteboards to introduce new concepts in an interesting and stimulating way. Also, pupils had some opportunities to use whiteboards interactively. Work generally took account of pupils' differing abilities and teaching assistants were used well to support less-able pupils. However, some learning activities did not always stretch or challenge more able pupils sufficiently.

Planning for literacy and mathematics lessons is more strongly developed than that for some other subjects. These plans helpfully identify the groups of pupils with which teachers and additional adults will work. There is scope for lesson plans to emphasise key vocabulary more and how links with other subjects will be addressed. Useful steps have been taken to strengthen marking, although some work is unmarked. Pupils understand the 'pink and green' marking approach and there are some good examples of this being used effectively to ensure that pupils know the next steps they must take in order to improve their work. Older pupils generally know the National Curriculum level at which they are working in English and mathematics. However, not all know what their target levels in these subjects are.

The school has not focused strongly enough on the development of relevant activities within the core curriculum that will contribute to the acceleration of pupils' progress. Staff that will coordinate cross-curricular work in literacy and numeracy are in place but they have yet to work with other staff on the planned delivery of cross-curricular aspects of mathematics and literacy. There is evidence that individual teachers are creating some opportunities in other subjects for learners to practise and extend their skills in information and communication technology and literacy. However, there is less evidence that mathematical skills are being developed in the same way. In some lessons, teachers have taken steps to make activities more stimulating, interesting and relevant to pupils by drawing on recent events, such as the volcanic ash cloud, and by basing activities on the lives of well-known footballers.

A number of initiatives have been introduced that are of interest to, and enjoyable for pupils, such as 'learning mathematics through physical education.' However, inspection evidence indicates that their impact on learning is limited. The school has

yet to review formally the impact and usefulness of these activities on learning. In some of these and other activities, pupils who are not actively involved have nothing to do, which means that valuable learning time is lost. Other activities, such as brief computing sessions in the computer suite, had only a limited impact on learning. Some initiatives have broadened the curriculum, such as the enrichment afternoon, where a range of activities are taught. The school has noted that this has improved attendance on the afternoons on which it is held.

Progress since being subject to special measures:

- 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 – inadequate
  
- 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 – inadequate

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher has focused primarily on improving pupils' behaviour, the school's environment and provision for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. The changes to special educational needs arrangements have increased the understanding of staff of vulnerable pupils' needs. The consistent application of the new behaviour policy has been effective and visitors confirm there is a calmer working atmosphere in the school. However, the school's leaders have not focused sufficiently on the urgent need to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of the curriculum. Weaknesses in the management of timetabling and in the arrangements for temporary teachers have contributed to slow improvement in these areas. Nonetheless, some useful steps have been taken to improve teaching and the curriculum. Teaching assistants have been trained on conducting guided reading. Teachers' plans and pupils' books are checked and feedback is given to staff. The formal monitoring of lessons has been mainly led by officers of the local authority. Teachers who have been observed are given clear direction on how to improve teaching and learning. In addition, there are some arrangements for school leaders to check on the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, but these are largely informal. A training session has been held on developing pupils' collaborative skills and a staff meeting has been held on what constitutes outstanding teaching. Two teachers have made visits to another school to observe good teaching which have proved beneficial. As well as making more use of existing good practice in the

school, there is scope to extend training greatly to develop the school's understanding of what constitutes good and outstanding teaching.

Arrangements for the statutory performance management of staff have been introduced and these are usefully linked to pupils' progress. Regular meetings with teachers to check on the progress pupils are making have also been introduced. A new school development plan has been drawn up. There is scope for this to have a more detailed set of actions, timescales and milestones that will show how the school will rapidly improve the quality of teaching and of the curriculum.

The new Chair of the Governing Body is growing into the role of challenging the school. Procedures for the governing body to receive and analyse information on the progress the school is making, so that it can be held to account, are underdeveloped. There is a link governor for special educational needs who has been involved in the revision of relevant policies. However, there are no link governors for the key subjects of literacy and numeracy.

#### External support

The local authority has provided satisfactory support to the school through the activities detailed in its action plan which appropriately identifies the need for the leadership of the school to be further developed. It is funding a national intervention programme designed to increase pupils' attainment in mathematics and English. Consultants from the local authority have provided training for the new inclusion manager and led observations of lessons. Other consultants have worked alongside staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage on a number of issues and financial training has been provided for school managers. The School Improvement Partner provides the school with broadly accurate assessments of the school's progress.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that school leaders, including governors, receive appropriate training and support so that they can provide clear direction for the school's improvement.