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22 October 2010

Dr M Ali  
Interim Acting Headteacher  
Cobblers Lane Primary School  
Cobblers Lane  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire  
WF8 2HN

Dear Dr Ali

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Cobblers Lane Primary School**

Following my visit with Jim Alexander, Additional Inspector, to your school on 20-21 October 2010, 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 2010. 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**

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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010.**

- As a matter of urgency, ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their progress and achievement in all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 by:
  - improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better throughout the school
  - ensuring that pupils are fully aware of what they have to learn, are sufficiently challenged in their work and know what they need to do to improve it further
  - improving pupils' enjoyment of lessons and their skills of independent learning.
- Improve behaviour so that all pupils and staff are safe in school by enabling teachers consistently to manage pupils' behaviour successfully.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - ensuring that all staff work together to achieve a shared vision for the school's success
  - implementing and monitoring the progress of a coherent development plan that is focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and the outcomes for pupils
  - ensuring that the governing body holds the leadership team fully to account for its work and meets all its statutory responsibilities.
- Improve attendance by reversing the current decline and ensuring that all pupils attend regularly.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Cobblers Lane Primary School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 20–21 October 2010**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

The substantive headteacher at the time of the previous inspection has been absent since May 2010 due to ill health. A member of the local authority school improvement service is currently acting as headteacher. A decision has not yet been made as to how long this arrangement will remain in place. The school is actively seeking to appoint a deputy headteacher.

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

Attainment is low and progress remains inadequate overall. An analysis of data presented by the school and the outcomes of lesson observations conducted during the inspection indicate that many pupils are making better progress than at the time of the previous inspection. However, this is not consistent, with pupils making better progress in some year groups and in some subjects than others. Pupils enjoy their learning because school leaders have taken action to address poor behaviour. As a result a more positive climate for learning has been established in classrooms.

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

The behaviour of pupils has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This area for improvement has been a priority for the school and rightly so. Improved behaviour is acknowledged by teachers, teaching assistants, pupils and ancillary staff. Pupils listen to their teachers during lessons, move around the school in a sensible and orderly fashion and are less inclined to behave in a disruptive manner at break times. During the monitoring inspection the behaviour of pupils during assembly was exemplary. As a result, pupils and staff now feel safe and able to focus on learning. This improvement has been achieved because of the clear direction given to staff and high expectations of pupils by the senior leadership team. An agreed behaviour management policy has been established and rigorously implemented by all staff. While a small minority of pupils still display unacceptable behaviour this is being increasingly well managed by adults throughout the school.

The declining trend in attendance identified at the previous inspection has been reversed. Policies, including systems and procedures to be adopted, have been

introduced and are understood by all staff. Absence is monitored closely and communication with parents has improved. Attendance has improved by 2% and is now approaching the national average. The school is aware that further work is required to reduce absence as a result of holidays taken during term time.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve behaviour so that all pupils and staff are safe in school by enabling teachers consistently to manage pupils' behaviour successfully – **good**.
- Improve attendance by reversing the current declining trend and ensuring that all pupils attend regularly – **satisfactory**.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching observed during the monitoring inspection is more consistent than it was at the time of the previous inspection. There are signs that the quality of teaching and learning is beginning to improve and this is starting to enhance the progress made by some pupils. The major reason teaching and learning are showing signs of improvement is because of the successful action taken to improve pupils' behaviour. Whereas at the time of the last inspection teachers were continually dealing with high levels of disruption, this is no longer the case. A climate for learning has now been re-established in lessons due to the initial focus on behaviour management. Teaching is still not consistently good throughout the school and this is acknowledged by senior leaders, but it is improving. Expectations of pupils are still too low and the use of assessment during lessons is not as sharp as it should be and it is not used to inform planning. In some classes there remains insufficient focus on developing the ability of pupils to work independently. The direction given to teaching assistants by teachers is clear as to the purpose of the task they are doing but lacks clarity about the way it should be tackled. Positive relationships underpin the improving attitudes shown by pupils. Effective lesson planning using a common format is helping the organisation of learning more than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are better informed about what they are to learn. The amount of time pupils spend listening to teachers is decreasing and this provides more opportunities for them to engage in their learning. The quality of marking is improving. Pupils now receive feedback that includes guidance as to how they may improve their work. Above all, teachers are growing in confidence and are more focused on meeting the needs of all pupils.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their progress and achievement in all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 by:
  - improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better throughout the school

- ensuring that pupils are fully aware of what they have to learn, are sufficiently challenged in their work and know what they need to do to improve it further
- improving pupils' enjoyment of lessons and their skills of independent learning – **satisfactory**.

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

The current acting headteacher, despite only being in post a short time, has developed an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He demonstrates a strong commitment to addressing all the areas for improvement. He is being ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher who uses her specialist knowledge of behaviour management to good effect. A strong sense of team work is emerging. To their credit, staff are extremely positive and share the vision of the headteacher for the school's success. Staff have worked tirelessly to help bring about change and their part in securing progress cannot be underestimated. The school improvement plan focuses on the key areas for improvement and initiatives, particularly those related to outcomes for pupils, are carefully monitored and evaluated by senior leaders. Middle leaders, many of whom are new to the role, are not fully involved in monitoring and evaluating provision. They are keen to do so and are developing the requisite skills necessary to play a key role in raising attainment. However, at present they are not directly influencing the drive to raise standards. The Interim Executive Board has only recently been established and members are beginning to have an understanding of the school's needs and are fully supportive of the work undertaken by school leaders.

The school leadership team has ensured that safeguarding policies and corresponding systems and procedures are now in place. The single central record now meets requirements and the child protection policy has been revised. Robust systems have been established for recording accidents and administering medicines. As a result of these actions pupils now feel safe.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - ensuring that all staff work together to achieve a shared vision for the school's success
  - implementing and monitoring the progress of a coherent development plan that is focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and the outcomes for students
  - ensuring that the governing body holds the leadership team fully to account for its work and meets all its statutory responsibilities – **satisfactory**.
- As a matter of urgency, ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met – **good**.

## **External support**

The quality and impact of the support provided by the local authority is good particularly in respect of securing the leadership of the school. The action plan produced by the authority is appropriate and focuses on the key issues.