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28 January 2011

Mrs Woolf  
Eastwood Primary School  
Rayleigh Road  
Leigh-on-Sea  
SS9 5UT

Dear Mrs Woolf

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Eastwood Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 January 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Southend-On-Sea.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2010

- **Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' learning by:**
  - ensuring that the more-able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons
  - making better use of assessment information to plan activities that increase the pace of pupils' learning and close gaps between the attainment of boys and girls
  - adopting strategies that engage pupils more so that they can take greater ownership of their learning
  - making better use of time in lessons to increase the pace of learning.
- **Develop a more effective curriculum that:**
  - promotes key skills, particularly writing, systematically across different subjects
  - makes learning more interesting by linking subjects more closely.
- **Establish a consistent approach to marking so that pupils know how to improve their work, by ensuring that:**
  - teachers provide a clear evaluation of pupils' strengths and the next important steps for their learning
  - pupils are involved more in setting their targets and assessing their progress and that of others.
- **Generate a greater capacity for sustaining improvements in the school by:**
  - defining clearly the roles of senior leaders
  - identifying where teachers' expertise needs improving and providing tailored professional development to improve outcomes for pupils
  - making sure that planned actions to tackle priorities are acted upon by all.
- **Raise attendance levels by making parents fully aware of their responsibilities to minimise absence.**

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

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 26 January 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work. They observed 13 teachers teach. Inspectors scrutinised school documentation including the raising attainment plan, pupil progress data, records of monitoring and pupils' exercise books. They met with representatives from the local authority, representatives from the governing body, the executive headteacher, the head of school, staff and pupils.

#### **Context**

Since the inspection in June 2010 a number of changes have taken place. Following the resignation of the substantive headteacher in July 2010, a position that remains unfilled, the headteacher of a neighbouring school was appointed as executive headteacher. In addition, a deputy headteacher from the executive headteacher's own school took up the position of head of school at Eastwood in January 2011. Further changes have seen one teacher leave the school and subsequently replaced; one teaching assistant leave following a contract review; and a local authority governor joining the governing body in September 2010.

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

Pupils' achievement and progress is similar to that reported at the inspection in June 2010. In Key Stage 1, most pupils are working towards the levels expected for their age, following a positive start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, in Key Stage 2, a large proportion of pupils are still working at levels well below those expected for their age. This is because of the legacy of underachievement and some remaining weak teaching. In September the executive leadership assessed pupils' levels of attainment. These data provide the executive leadership team and teachers with a generally accurate baseline for curriculum planning. However, because teachers' knowledge and management of assessment is at an early stage of development, the quality of information available to senior leaders on pupils' progress is not always reliable.

In the lessons observed by inspectors, pupils' progress was too often inadequate. Teachers are not yet using their knowledge of pupils' levels of attainment to plan appropriate tasks, particularly for pupils of below or above average ability. The work in pupils' exercise books demonstrates that standards are below those expected for their age. However, the volume of work completed is increasing and pupils, in Year 6 in particular, are beginning to take more care in their presentation. Pupils' exercise books now have the date and title of the piece of work. All pupils have a reading

record log and are keen to improve their reading abilities. A significant proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2 have difficulty with spelling. This is because their phonological awareness is very poor. The targeted provision for these pupils is insufficient. Consequently, it is a barrier to their ability to make progress in literacy.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, (Nursery and Reception) are making better progress than older pupils. They enjoy a good range of activities, which teachers match appropriately to their learning needs. Teachers place a good focus on speaking and listening in Key Stage 1. Inspectors observed pupils concentrating well on learning to spell words and write sentences with correct punctuation during their phonic lesson. However, teachers' expectations of boys in particular are not always high enough.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Raise standards by accelerating pupils' progress - **inadequate**

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. In the better lessons, pupils demonstrated a good attitude to learning and were keen to tackle the tasks set. However, in one class where teaching was inadequate, a small minority of pupils' poor behaviour disadvantaged those who wanted to work.

Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of healthy eating and were keen to make conversation with inspectors about the excellent quality of the lunches provided by the school. Pupils' attendance is improving and, before the heavy snow, had risen to levels which were close to the national average.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Raise attendance levels by making parents fully aware of their responsibilities to minimise absence - **satisfactory**

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Inspectors observed satisfactory teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, nearly a quarter of the lessons observed by inspectors in Key Stage 2 were inadequate. While this is an improvement since the inspection in June, the proportion of weak teaching remains too high. Where teaching was satisfactory, teachers' expectations were clear and most pupils were purposeful in their attitudes to learning. Teachers set work which engaged the pupils' interest. Pupils are beginning to take some pride in their work. However, in the inadequate lessons, the tasks set did not match pupils' learning needs well and teachers did not adapt tasks effectively during the lesson to help those who were struggling. Behaviour in one lesson was very poor. Teaching failed to motivate the pupils and those who were keen to learn, were unable to do so because of the constant interruptions from a

small minority of pupils. Teaching assistants in this class made valiant efforts to help the disruptive pupils. However, this led to other pupils who needed additional support failing to make progress.

Following clear advice and guidance from the executive leadership, teachers are beginning to make better use of time through strategies such as early morning work. This is helping pupils to develop good working habits. Teachers are encouraging pupils to attend school regularly and providing rewards for the best attenders. They are starting lessons promptly and this is reducing the time wasted between lessons. However, in Key Stage 1, teachers do not always direct the time in lessons sufficiently well to ensure pupils are engaged in appropriate learning tasks. Marking is now regular and there are some pockets of effective marking, particularly in the upper part of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, teachers often mark work alongside the pupil. Although pupils are gaining a good understanding of what they have done well, teachers do not always pick up pupils' errors quickly or consistently enough. Pupils are beginning to take notice of teachers' comments and, in some classes, they tackle their corrections in English and mathematics regularly.

The curriculum is improving. All teachers have long and medium term planning in place with an appropriate emphasis on the key skills. However, short term planning does not provide sufficient detail to pinpoint where weaker teaching requires support. Teachers are not making a thorough analysis of the skills pupils need to learn during lessons, or considering the sequence in which they need to build on key skills to accelerate their progress. Pupils now have individual targets and a few say they help their work. However, the effectiveness of this relates directly to the quality of teaching. Systems for monitoring pupil progress in the essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics are now in place.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Improve the quality of teaching - **inadequate**
- Develop a more effective curriculum - **satisfactory**
- Establish a consistent approach to marking so that pupils know how to improve their work - **satisfactory**

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

The executive headteacher, supported effectively by the head of school, is improving the quality of education the pupils receive. Both have high expectations for pupils' achievement and have set a new direction for the school, which most staff are embracing enthusiastically. The executive leadership team has introduced systems of accountability in all aspects of school life. For example, staff job descriptions set out clear individual performance targets. Staff report that these are helpful. Well targeted professional development and support is improving classroom practice. Subject leaders are keen to develop their areas and are auditing the curriculum. The

executive leadership team is pacing change well. However, defining the roles of all substantive senior staff is proving problematic. Not all have agreed job descriptions and they are slow to accept the change that is required. Some substantive senior leaders have no class responsibility. They spend too much teaching time on administrative tasks which have minimal impact on improving classroom practice and accelerating pupils' progress. This limits the otherwise growing capacity of the executive leadership team to drive the school out of special measures rapidly.

The system to manage pupils' progress is at an early stage of development because the senior staff responsible for implementing it lacked the skills and knowledge necessary to lead this aspect. The executive leadership has provided intensive support and training. The school is now in a better position to monitor pupils' progress and the senior staff responsible is keen to lead this effectively. However, this aspect, linked to the quality of teaching, remains an area of concern.

The governing body has set up a special measures monitoring committee. The appointment of the local authority governor as chair of this committee is strengthening its capacity. The monitoring committee is questioning the school effectively. However, the minutes of its meetings are not sufficiently detailed.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Generate a greater capacity for sustaining improvements in school - **satisfactory**

### **External support**

The local authority has revised its statement of action so that it sets suitably challenging quantitative targets for all aspects of the plan where appropriate and it clarifies the deadlines for the completion of developments. Overall, the support the local authority is providing is good. It acted swiftly following the judgement of special measures to secure the services of a neighbouring headteacher as the executive headteacher at Eastwood. This is providing much needed stability, strong leadership and is a good choice of partner school. Local authority support of the additional position of head of school is accelerating improvement. Bespoke training and links with partner schools, managed by the executive headteacher, is securing improvement and the local authority is providing assurance that it has the capacity to increase support where required; for example, in promising further external support for the governing body in dealing with staffing issues.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Eradicate inadequate teaching
- The governing body must take decisive action to increase the role and accountability of substantive senior leaders in school improvement