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11 November 2010

Mrs E Ford  
Headteacher  
Bridgewater Primary School  
Bridgewater Street  
Little Hulton  
Manchester  
M38 9WD

Dear Mrs Ford

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

Following my visit to your school on 9 and 10 November 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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**

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 Salford.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2009

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - providing further training for teachers to enable them to update their skills and develop an understanding of how to assess pupils' achievement in lessons providing pupils with work which is based on their prior attainment and challenges them to improve
  - increasing the pace of lessons through setting higher expectations of what pupils can do and understand, and of the quality and quantity of their work.
  
- Ensure that pupils make much better progress and attain higher standards by:
  - involving them more in their own learning and assessment
  - using the information gained from checking on pupils' progress to set challenging personal targets.
  
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
  - producing a whole-school curriculum which plans a systematic progression of the skills and knowledge pupils need across different subjects and over time ensuring that planning fully meets all pupils' needs.
  
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
  - making leaders and managers, at all levels, more accountable for the performance of the school
  - including all staff and governors in the analysis of assessment information in order to set challenging targets for the school; identify action to be taken and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of such action
  - ensuring that statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding, equality of opportunity and community cohesion are met
  - enabling governors to acquire the knowledge, skills and information they need to equip them to support and challenge the work of the school

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

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 November 2010**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed 11 lessons or part lessons, including extended observations in the Early Years Foundation Stage, scrutinised a wide range of documents, met with the headteacher, members of staff, the Link Parent, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and a representative from the local authority and spoke to pupils and parents.

#### **Context**

In September 2010, a new, experienced and substantive Year 2 teacher joined the school as a member of the leadership team and as senior teacher in Key Stage 1. A newly qualified teacher took up her temporary, one year post in Key Stage 2 at the same time. Staffing issues in Key Stage 2 have improved on the position at the time of the previous inspection but uncertainties remain. The deputy headteacher was absent during this inspection due to ill health and one further substantive teacher has resigned with effect from this month. The Interim Executive Board remains in place.

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

In all three key stages the profile of pupils' attainment has shifted upwards. Across the school, attainment overall is now much closer to expected levels. The results of summer 2010 national assessments for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests are much improved on previous years. These results are supported by the school's own data and by the work observed during lesson observations.

At the end of the summer term 2010, 50% of the children in the Reception class achieved a good level of development. This is a significant improvement on the 2009 figure of 18% and brings the school's figures close to the national of 56%. The same proportion of children, 50%, scored at the expected levels across all thirteen of the assessed scales. Several children, including boys, achieved beyond expectations for this age group in reading and linking sounds to letters. Notably, there was no significant difference in the scores of boys and girls apart from in writing. In an otherwise strong set of results, the weakest aspect overall was calculation.

The school's own monitoring data support these figures. In September 2010, of the 30 children moving into Year 1, 26 could read 45 of the high frequency words compared to the previous year when only four could. At the time of this inspection, at least three children in Reception could read between 50 and 70 of the high

frequency words and the majority of others were acquiring them. The pace of progress in the Nursery and Reception is rapid as the staff realise that, given the right conditions, the children can achieve well. Evidence from observations confirms that the children are much better prepared for early reading and writing and that greater attention is paid to developing their speech and auditory skills.

In Key Stage 1, there was a sharp rise in the results of the summer 2010 teacher assessments which were moderated by the local authority. The school's individual pupil average score was higher than the national: 15.5 compared to 15.2. The significant underperformance in reading, writing and mathematics that has been evident in the data for a number of years no longer exists. The standards attained by the school in reading and writing at age seven were higher than the national figures and in mathematics they were broadly in line. Boys performed better than their peers nationally in reading and writing and better than the girls in their class in reading. This represents a significant improvement in the profile of boys' attainment. The girls in Key Stage 1 performed as well as their peers nationally. Pupils in receipt of free school meals performed considerably better than their peers nationally but not as well as their classmates. The school knows that it now needs to ensure that these pupils continue to flourish and reach the standards they are capable of reaching.

The Key Stage 2 figures for the 2010 national tests for eleven-year-olds show a marked improvement on those of previous years due to the considerably larger proportions of pupils gaining the higher level, Level 5, in English and mathematics. In 2010, 40% of pupils gained Level 5 in English compared to 18% in 2009 and, in mathematics, the figure was 35% compared to 5%.

Again, these figures are confirmed by the school's own data. For example, the school's monitoring of reading ages shows that, of the 28 seven-year-olds moving from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in September 2010, 11 had reading ages more than two years ahead of their birthday ages and a further five were 12 months or more ahead. Only two pupils had a reading age below their birthday age and these had made progress significant enough to leave them just a few months behind. At the other end of the school, of the pupils in the current Year 6 class all, bar four, started the academic year with a reading age in line with or above their birthday age. Three of the four behind in their reading had made rapid progress - between 14 and 20 months progress - in the summer term. The large-scale underachievement that existed in the school is being eaten away.

The evidence of rising standards and increasing rates of progress is clear to see in the pupils' work now beautifully displayed around the school and in the greater quantity of work in their books. However, there are still gaps in pupils' knowledge in specific areas. In mathematics, the school has correctly identified that it now needs to look again at calculation in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and on practical mathematics topics, such as weight and measurement, across the

whole school. The quality of pupils' written work remains a concern. In Key Stage 1, more attention needs to be focused on sentence construction and in Key Stage 2 the focus needs to be on pupils improving a piece of writing and knowing how to move it from one level to the next.

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

- Ensure that pupils make much better progress and attain higher standards – **good**

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

As on previous visits, pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school was excellent. Those pupils who spoke to the inspector reported being happy at school. Several who initiated conversations with the inspector drew her attention to their work on the walls or commented on the topic they were doing in class. Clearly, the pupils are feeling the benefits of the changes to the curriculum. On the first day of this inspection, parents' evening was taking place during which the school conducted a brief survey and the inspector spoke with a small number of parents. Overwhelmingly, the parents surveyed are happy with the school and the work it is doing but some remain concerned about continued staff absences in Key Stage 2.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The inspector observed 11 lessons or part lessons, of which three were outstanding, four were good and four were satisfactory. This is a much stronger profile of teaching than has been the case previously.

The strengths in the teaching currently lie in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the inspector observed outstanding guided reading and letter sounds sessions; in Key Stage 1, where all teaching observed was at least good; and in Year 6. The satisfactory teaching that was observed had no major weaknesses.

In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 2 on number facts and measuring length, several features were prominent. The teaching was focused on questioning and probing pupils' understanding, picking up on any errors or misunderstandings and revising and rehearsing knowledge. Pupils were required to reply in full sentences using the correct technical vocabulary. A good range of resources was used well to maintain pupils' interest and the teaching ensured that all pupils participated. The lesson moved along briskly and pupils were highly engaged and responsive. As a result, they made excellent progress in the lesson.

Teachers' planning is much improved and is more consistent. The work to develop the curriculum continues and this is already bearing fruit. Systems to assess pupils' work are stronger, although there is still work to be done in relation to assessing their progress in writing and developing teachers' knowledge in this aspect.

Improvements have been made in the identification and management of pupils with special educational needs and those who may be vulnerable.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching – **good**
- Improve the quality of the curriculum – **good**

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

The headteacher continues to provide strong leadership and drive forward changes but other staff are increasing in confidence, taking responsibility and showing initiative. The leadership load is gradually being shared out among staff, although this is still at an early stage and the school still relies on external support. Crucially, morale in the school appears to be high and individual staff reported being enthusiastic once more about their work.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader applied for, and was awarded, a Lottery Fund grant to purchase new furniture and to develop the outdoor area. She has taken on the role of the school's coordinator for the local Education Improvement Partnership and recently participated in the coordination of the training day for local schools and manages the funding for enrichment activities. She has also recently taken on the role of the school's designated teacher for Looked After Children. The Nursery and Reception classes have been visited by staff from other schools in the local authority to observe the teaching of reading and phonics.

The Year 1 teacher has taken on the role of special educational needs coordinator, is undertaking the necessary training and has contributed to the implemented changes to the school's systems. The Year 6 teacher acts as mentor to new staff and has taken on a pivotal role in the analysis of the school's data. The headteacher has recently established an 'Every Child Matters' team which includes key members of teaching and support staff who collectively and individually have responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of children who are, or may be, vulnerable. Together, the members of the team are developing school-wide systems to support such pupils.

In addition, there is an established programme of monitoring activities which are undertaken by the headteacher and the other leaders. Staff absences, however, remain a concern.

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

- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management – **good**

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide good support, in a number of ways, to the school. Since the last inspection, the school has received support from an Intensive Support Programme consultant, a Communication, Language and Literacy Consultant and an Advanced Skills Teacher. Links with Hulton Education Partnership have been strengthened and all staff have received training on the Common Assessment Framework from the authority's locality team.

The School Improvement Partner and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board continue to provide clear and unambiguous guidance to the school.