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28 January 2011

Mr Christopher Hassall  
Slater Primary School  
Slater Street  
Leicester  
LE3 5AS

Dear Mr Hassall

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Slater Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 and 27 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 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 – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
  - improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - introducing robust assessment procedures that give teachers the necessary information to ensure that lessons are challenging and matched closely to pupils' prior attainment
  - ensuring that basic skills are reinforced effectively through work in all subjects
  - ensuring that the curriculum is modified effectively to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language
  - planning work that motivates and inspires pupils and promotes enjoyment in learning.
- Improve procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils by:
  - introducing effective induction procedures for the many pupils who join the school throughout any given year
  - taking a more rigorous approach to promoting regular attendance.
- Strengthen arrangements for securing pupils' welfare and safety issues by:
  - taking action, by April 2010, to rectify all health and safety issues identified by the local authority
  - introducing effective systems to identify, support and record the progress of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable in any way.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
  - embedding ambition throughout the school and introducing rigorous procedures for checking on standards and quality for planning for school improvement
  - giving all leaders the training, time and resources they need to drive up the quality of teaching and learning
  - ensuring that governors oversee the work of the school effectively and collect the necessary first-hand evidence to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

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

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 26 and 27 January 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the executive deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, representatives from the local authority, teachers and teaching assistants.

#### **Context**

Currently, a teacher is on long-term leave. The consultation period for making the decision about hard federation of Slater Primary School with Taylor Road Primary School has been extended in response to the wishes of groups of parents.

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

School assessment information shows that progress in reading and mathematics continues to accelerate and is now good in some years, such as in Years 4 and 5. As a result standards in these years are rising more strongly than they were, narrowing the gap between the school and national expectations. In Year 6 there is a small cohort of eight pupils. The school's assessment information shows that they are making at least satisfactory progress, but half of the cohort are either new to the school and speak little English, or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that standards in Year 6 remain low.

Progress in Years 2 and 3 has accelerated because of the considerable improvement in the quality of teaching. The school has successfully managed to ensure that pupils in Year 1 make at least satisfactory progress despite continued weaknesses in teaching. This is because of the successfully targeted intervention activities to support the majority of pupils who either come from homes where English is not the first language, or have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making accelerated progress in the development of their social, emotional and creative skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because the much improved environment for learning means children confidently and very happily choose from a range of stimulating activities. Development of language and numeracy skills is slower, because activities are insufficiently tailored to meet the needs of individual or groups of children.

The progress made in writing throughout the school remains slow. This is because teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in English and other lessons.

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 – satisfactory

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils report how much they enjoy coming to school. They particularly like mathematics lessons and those in which they can take part in practical activities. The older pupils also appreciate being much better informed about the next steps they need to take to improve their learning. In lessons, behaviour is nearly always satisfactory and often good, and is having an improving influence on their learning. For example, in a lesson about symmetry involving pupils in Years 2 and 3, they had to move around the room to find a partner to match the other half of their pattern. This was carried out in an enthusiastic but well-behaved manner.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching continues to improve. It is consistently good in Years 4, 5 and 6. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 2 and 3, pupils and children benefit from teaching that is of a much higher quality than it was. In Year 1, instability in the teaching has meant that pupils have experienced much weak teaching in lessons. The school, supported by the local authority, has taken all the appropriate steps to remedy this, but currently the situation has not been resolved. In lessons and additional activities, work is much more closely matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. In consequence, the school's information about progress shows that pupils who either come from homes where English is not the first language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress that is nearly always satisfactory and is often good. This is as a result of teachers making better use of assessment information when planning lessons. Assessment information is not used as effectively to ensure that more able pupils are sufficiently challenged in their work. Pupils report that it is often too easy.

Lesson plans show that there are some better links between subjects. So for example, pupils can practice their information and communication technology and mathematical skills in other subjects. The weakest links are the few opportunities afforded by the curriculum for pupils to write at length. Standards are low and progress is slow because they have insufficient opportunity to develop the necessary range of writing styles that they should be competent in by the end of Year 6.

The school has now established the necessary procedures to support and safeguard newly arrived pupils and those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable,

and to ensure the health and safety of all. These effective procedures are now fully embedded into the school routine.

The school, with the support of the educational welfare officer, is taking appropriate steps to improve attendance. When account is taken of the recent problems presented by the snow as well as a flu epidemic, pupils' attendance is rising gradually. The school has identified that there are some groups that may be hard to reach, for example those families that take extended holidays, whose attendance needs to improve further.

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

- Improve procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils – satisfactory
- Strengthen arrangements for securing pupils' welfare and safety issues – good

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

The school continues to benefit from the effective leadership of the executive leadership team. Morale amongst staff is much higher than it was. They are demonstrating a robust determination to improve provision. To this end they are effectively supported by the opportunities provided for staff training, either in school, with the partner school or from local authority staff.

The assistant headteacher has established productive links with parents and consequently they hold the school in much higher esteem than they did. He has also competently taken over the day-to-day management of aspects of the school's work, such as the procedures to support vulnerable pupils. Some monitoring and evaluation procedures, such as book scrutinies, have been less effective than they could be. Points for development have been accurately identified, but then insufficient action has been taken to improve provision, for example, in the teaching of writing.

Governance is improving. Recently the governing body has been strengthened by the recruitment of enthusiastic parent governors. The governing body is now much more involved in the work of the school and governors are developing their ability to question leaders about its work.

The long-term future of the school has still not been secured after nearly a year of planning, deliberation and consultation. This is not currently having a detrimental impact on the school. However, it could do if it is not resolved quickly because leadership arrangements for the school are temporary and based on an informal partnership with Taylor Road Primary School.

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

- Improve leadership, management and governance – satisfactory

### **External support**

The school continues to appreciate the support of the local authority for staff training, such as in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and for allocating the necessary resources for improvement. The local authority has been less effective in its work with governors to secure the future of the school.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that better quality teaching is secured for Year 1 pupils by the time of the next visit.
- Ensure that a firm plan for the future leadership of the school has been agreed by all stakeholders by the time of the next visit.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing through better provision, particularly planning more opportunities for extended writing