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8 October 2010

Miss Lisa Hoyle  
Acting Headteacher  
Luddenden Dene Junior Infant and Nursery School  
Dene View  
Luddendenfoot  
Halifax  
West Yorkshire  
HX2 6PB

Dear Miss Hoyle

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Luddenden Dene CofE (VC)  
Junior Infant and Nursery School**

Following my visit with Peter Jones, Additional Inspector, to your school on 6 and 7 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 April 2010. The most important 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**

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 Calderdale.

Yours sincerely

John Young  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures are applied rigorously at all times.
  
- Improve the overall quality of teaching so that pupils' progress accelerates, by:
  - planning work that is suitably matched to pupils' differing ability levels
  - ensuring that all pupils are fully aware of what they are expected to learn by the end of a lesson
  - making the best use of available time and resources so that pupils stay motivated and engaged throughout the lesson
  - eradicating inadequate teaching.
  
- Review and adapt the curriculum so that it allows staff to plan for the progressive development of pupils' skills.
  
- Ensure leaders, manager and governors monitor all aspects of the school's provision rigorously in order to produce:
  - accurate self-evaluation
  - sharply focused improvement planning.
  
- Accelerate children's progress in the Early Year's Foundation Stage, by:
  - improving the use of assessment information so that children's progress can be accurately tracked
  - using this information to plan more precisely the next steps in their learning
  - ensuring that the outdoor area in the Nursery provides a high quality environment for learning.

## **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Luddenden Dene CofE (VC) Junior Infant and Nursery School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 6-7 October 2010**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors visited each of the seven classes in the school. They scrutinised relevant school documents and reports. Discussions took place with senior school leaders, a forum of teaching and non-teaching staff and groups of pupils. The lead inspector also spoke with the Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority representative.

#### **Context**

The headteacher in place at the time of the last inspection resigned in May 2010. In July 2010 the deputy headteacher and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) both retired. A Key Stage 2 teacher has also left the school since the last inspection. To counter these losses the school: recruited an acting headteacher for two terms, four days a week, in June 2010; appointed an acting deputy headteacher in September 2010 for one term; and allowed the existing Reception class teacher to take over the role of SENCO. The local authority has not exercised its powers to appoint additional governors. Talks have been held between Luddenden Dene and the school the acting headteacher came from about working in collaboration.

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

In 2009, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, made inadequate progress from broadly average starting points so that their attainment was below age-related expectations when they entered Key Stage 1. In 2010, results from the Early Years Foundation Stage profile indicate that children made more effective progress than in 2009 and the ratio reaching age-related expectations across the areas of learning increased from 49% to 71% in 2010. Over the past three years, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has declined, moving from above to in-line with national averages. Over the same period the number of pupils gaining the highest levels has also fallen. Between 2007 and 2009, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 fell sharply. Pupils' achievement also worsened and was inadequate overall in 2009. However, in 2010, following substantial local authority intervention before the national tests in May, Year 6 pupils' attainment rose and their achievement improved. This was particularly the case in mathematics, where the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 or better rose from 35% in 2009 to 78%, albeit with a more-able cohort than sat the exams in 2009. The ratio of pupils gaining the highest grades also rose but remains well below national averages. Nonetheless, in 2010 the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 4 in English, and mathematics was above national averages.

The school's data show that most pupils are on track to reach their targets. However, this picture was not fully supported by a series of lesson observations that inspectors did with the acting headteacher, which revealed a much more variable picture, particularly in terms of pupils' progress, learning and engagement. Furthermore, not all staff in Key Stages 1 and 2 are using the same baseline data to chart pupils' progress and subsequent achievement, which compromises the validity of the school's assertions. Staff are not using an agreed procedure for target setting and tracking pupils that takes account of their prior learning and their progress, relative to national age-related expectations. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have begun to take steps to recognise, collect and evaluate evidence of children's progress better and in a more systematic way. This is helping staff to make more informed choices about the next steps in pupils' learning. Their assessment data have been moderated by the local authority. Despite the variable picture there is some clear evidence of impact in each phase of learning.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 – **satisfactory**
- Accelerate children's progress in the Early Year's Foundation Stage – **satisfactory**

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Inspectors have asked the school to ensure pupils' behaviour in the playground is appropriate at all times and will check this is the case during the next monitoring inspection.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Staff recognise that there are key aspects of their provision that require improvement. These are the quality of teaching, the support and guidance provided to pupils, the quality of planning, and teacher's adherence to and implementation of, agreed school protocols. Teachers say they are keen to increase the effectiveness of their practice and that they would benefit from observing or working with acknowledged excellent practitioners. The local authority consultant support provided six months ago was targeted at boosting Year 6 results. Consequently, most staff have not had any external coaching or mentoring. There has been some recent internal training and as a result of this, staff have been made aware of new expectations with regards to the quality of their planning and delivery.

There is some good teaching in the school, as a result of which pupils clearly enjoy: leading their own learning; hypothesizing; problem-solving; and working collaboratively. They like being stretched and gain confidence when staff have high expectations of them. But it is also clear that there remains too much inadequate practice. Planning is poor overall. There is a lack of specificity and precision about how lessons will develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, or meet their varied needs. Staff do not consistently use sufficiently stimulating approaches to

learning that capture pupils' imagination. As a result, pupils gaze out of the window, hold their head in their hands, or sigh resignedly! Not all staff give pupils the chance to demonstrate their competence, nor do they check that pupils have absorbed key learning points. Too many pupils seek help or copy their peers before trying to solve things themselves. Staff are now regularly sharing learning intentions with pupils at the beginning of all lessons. This is helping to ensure that more pupils have a clearer idea of what is expected of them and what they should have learnt by the end of the lesson. However, these intentions are not always communicated effectively or reviewed to assess how successful pupils have been in reaching the targets set. The deployment and effectiveness of teaching assistants is variable. The work to review and adapt the curriculum has been slow-moving and little has been achieved to date. There are plans to undertake a skills audit and introduce whole-school cross-curricular planning, but this has not started. There has been effective work to improve the quality of the outdoor area in the nursery. It now boasts a range of resources that encourage children to explore, experiment and interact with each other. However, there is scope to give children more independence by giving them the option to flow freely from inside to outside.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, by:
  - planning work that is suitably matched to pupils' differing ability levels – **inadequate**
  - ensuring all pupils are fully aware of what they are expected to learn by the end of a lesson – **satisfactory**
  - making the best use of available time and resources so that pupils stay motivated and engaged throughout the lesson – **inadequate**
  - eradicating inadequate teaching – **inadequate**
- Review and adapt the curriculum so that it allows staff to plan for the progressive development of pupils' skills – **inadequate**

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

Taking account of the time they have been in place, the new senior leadership team is gelling well and have made an industrious start in addressing the issues afflicting the school. They have secured some early success by strengthening safeguarding procedures and enhancing the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. But, other aspects such as the curriculum and teaching and learning deficiencies are more deep-rooted. Staff say senior leaders are approachable and have consulted with and actively involved them in key aspects of the improvement planning process. Senior staff have introduced a raft of actions designed to rationalise staff roles and responsibilities and bring a greater coherence to the day-to-day operation and effectiveness of the school. Staff morale is high. Although senior leaders are not yet systematically monitoring all aspects of the school's work, they have devised a comprehensive evaluation schedule which they are preparing to roll out. They are triangulating their preliminary scrutiny of: staff planning; pupils' work; their analysis

of pupil data; and using the information gathered, together with pupils' feedback to guide their development strategy. There are plans to introduce regular pupils' progress meetings so that staff are held more accountable for the achievement of pupils in their classes. They will provide a platform for professional dialogue, robust challenge and support. This monitoring inspection included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found that they meet current requirements. Since the last inspection, the school has conducted a detailed audit of safeguarding. They are systematically strengthening their procedures, policies, provision, training and record keeping. Governors accept that they have not been proactive enough in ensuring they are in a better position to monitor key aspects of the school's work more closely.

Despite some initial success, the school is far from being back on an even keel and there is significant work to do. The fact that the leadership team is only temporary compromises the capacity of the school to sustain any improvements achieved to date. Nonetheless, senior leaders are gaining a more accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures are applied rigorously at all times – **satisfactory**
- Ensure leaders, manager and governors monitor all aspects of the school's provision rigorously in order to produce accurate self-evaluation and sharply focused improvement planning – **satisfactory**

### **External support**

Since the school went into special measures the local authority has provided governor and SENCO support, Early Years Foundation Stage support and carried out a series of audits of the quality of provision in the school. Its officers have set up a strategic steering group to offer support and challenge to the school. The local authority also brokered the appointments of the acting head and acting deputy headteachers. The statement of action meets requirements and provides a useful framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work to address the key issues from the last inspection report. The School Improvement Partner has been assigned to the school one day a week to support the school's new leaders.