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Mrs Christine Lacey  
Headteacher  
Hallgate Primary School  
Hallgate  
Cottingham  
HU16 4DD

Dear Mrs Lacey

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

Following my visit to your school on 10 and 11 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 second 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 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 – **inadequate**

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – **inadequate**

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 the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

John Young  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise standards and improve the rate of pupils' progress by:
  - improving the quality of teaching and learning to make it at least consistently good in all classes
  - ensuring that pupils are given the guidance they need to improve their work
  - using assessment information to match work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities
  - developing a more creative curriculum, which matches pupils' needs and interests
  - challenging the more-able pupils to ensure that they achieve their potential.
- Improving the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all groups of pupils are meeting challenging targets
  - identifying a manageable number of key priorities and producing detailed action plans to bring about improvement
  - making the best use of available time and resources so that pupils stay motivated and engaged throughout the lesson.
- Improve the school's governance by:
  - developing the role of the governing body in monitoring, evaluating and driving the school's improvement
  - ensuring the governing body holds teachers to account for the progress pupils make
  - ensuring that policies meet statutory requirements and are kept up to date.
- Improve outcomes and the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring that indoor and outdoor activities are challenging and purposeful and clearly linked to all areas of learning
  - using day-to-day assessment more effectively to inform the next steps in learning for individual children
  - providing better opportunities for developing children's creative skills.

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

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 November 2010**

#### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector observed teaching and learning in each phase of education and visited eight of the ten classes in the school. He scrutinised school documents and reports. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, governors and a local authority representative.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection the school has continued to experience significant turbulence in staffing. In addition to the three long-term absences reported previously, two further members of staff, including the Early Years Foundation Stage leader are now absent. Moreover, two of the three long-term supply staff covering some of these absences were also absent during this monitoring inspection. The deputy headteacher has resigned. To compensate, in addition to a number of supply staff, the seconded assistant headteacher has been promoted to acting deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher has been seconded to the school until April 2011. The Early Years Foundation Stage consultant's support to the school has ended.

#### **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 the ratio of pupils reaching age-related expectations across the areas of learning increased. However, within this overall improvement, key skills, such as pupils' ability to link sounds and letters, read and write, were much lower than age-related expectations. In 2009, pupils' average point scores and the proportion of them gaining the highest levels by the end of Key Stage 1 were significantly below national averages. In 2010, pupils' overall attainment rose to become broadly in line with national averages. Underneath this headline, the attainment of girls, pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils who speak English as an additional language was much lower than their counterparts nationally. The ratio of pupils gaining the highest levels remained well-below national averages. In 2009, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 was well-above average in terms of their average point scores and the number of pupils reaching the highest levels in English. In 2010, pupils' attainment fell to below average against most indicators, despite the 2010 cohort attaining significantly above-average standards at the end of Key Stage 1.

The school's latest data show that significant numbers of pupils are not on track to reach their end-of-year targets, with the attainment gap widening in many cases. Writing remains an issue in all phases, as does the achievement and attainment of more-able pupils. While there is evidence of pockets of more effective progress, pupils' progress remains slow. There is considerable inconsistency in the use of data by staff in the main school to match work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities and this is hampering the pace of pupils' progress. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit have taken steps to recognise, collect and evaluate evidence of children's progress in a more systematic way. This is helping them to make more informed decisions about the next steps in children's learning.

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

- Raise standards and improve the rate of pupils' progress – inadequate

### **The effectiveness of provision**

A series of joint lesson observations with senior school staff concluded that the impact of teaching on learning is extremely variable with a significant amount of barely satisfactory and weaker practice observed. This is not good enough to close the attainment gap caused by pupils' previous underachievement and is reflected in their slow progress against their targets. Pupils' general awareness of their targets is higher because in core subjects they are recorded in the front of their books. In pockets, there is some effective practice which is enabling pupils to thrive. The most effective learning observed took place when teachers' high expectations, strong subject knowledge and effective planning and questioning were used to enthral pupils with fascinating and appropriately challenging activities. In one setting, pupils were given opportunities to illustrate their new knowledge and understanding, and to take responsibility for leading their own learning by evaluating the quality of their work and devising their own improvement targets. However, this is far from the norm. Weaker practice was characterised by a lack of specificity in planning, delivery, marking and feedback so that pupils were not always clear about exactly what was expected of them, how well they were doing or how to improve the quality of their work. Similarly, because of a lack of precision in planning, lessons drifted with no clearly defined purpose and/or pupils became disengaged and very little learning took place. Staff do not consistently challenge poor presentation and low volumes of work, and the effectiveness with which teaching assistants are utilised is too variable. The impact of the raft of strategies, implemented to secure improvement, is being limited by these inconsistencies, together with ongoing turbulence in staffing, some staff proving resistant to change and the resultant lack of adherence to agreed policies and procedures.

The school's leaders continue to explore ways of making the curriculum more accessible and exciting for pupils. A series of 'wow activities' and themes have been introduced. Some of these, such as the 'hands-on' bridge-building topic which drew on design technology, mathematics, science, history and geography really captured the imagination of pupils. The extent to which the connections between subjects are being routinely reinforced to pupils is variable but, nonetheless, some progress has

been made in rolling this approach throughout the school. The improvements identified in Early Years Foundation Stage provision at the previous monitoring inspection have been consolidated and offer children stimulating, well-planned and well-resourced learning environments where they can interact, experiment, and develop their skills across the areas of learning. In particular, children's creative development is being encouraged, extended and supported via the planned and child-initiated activities available such as the 'choice challenges' and the increased opportunities for children to flow freely from inside to outside.

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

- Improve the outcomes and the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage – **satisfactory**

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

Senior leaders and managers are working very hard to address the deep-rooted issues afflicting the school. To this end, they have introduced and are trying to embed a range of improvement strategies. While they have secured some initial success in enhancing aspects of Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes and provision, raising overall standards at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at Key Stage 2, their impact has been more limited in a number of previously highlighted key areas, most notably: improving the quality of teaching and learning, and accelerating current pupils' progress. Their cause is being hindered by the reluctance of some staff to implement new ways of working and the instability of staffing. Nonetheless, leaders and managers are systematically monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's work and have introduced a series of non-negotiable expectations in terms of assessment, teaching and curriculum provision. Leaders' regular scrutiny of staff planning and pupils' work as well as their analysis of pupil data are informing their improvement strategy, which is well conceived. They have updated whole-school policies and rationalised some staff roles and responsibilities to provide greater coherence. It is also clear that staff are being held more to account for the progress of pupils in their classes. Nevertheless, given the picture painted at the last monitoring inspection and the time that has elapsed since, the school has not delivered the improvements imagined or expected. It remains the case that substantial numbers of pupils are underachieving across the school and insufficient progress has been made in tackling the underlying causes. This is a setback but not a condemnation of their effectiveness. The lack of substantive deputy and assistant headteachers compromises the school's capacity to develop a longer-term strategy.

After a relatively slow start, members of the governing body are coming to terms with the full extent of their roles and responsibilities. Following an audit of their skills and experiences, they have introduced a number of new procedures designed to hold the school more to account. They have planned a schedule to review school policies to verify that they meet statutory requirements. However, given the time that has elapsed since the previous inspection and the last monitoring inspection, it is reasonable to have expected them to be further forward in addressing these previously identified shortcomings. Governors accept that they need to acquire

additional skills and knowledge to challenge senior leaders and managers more robustly about the school's effectiveness in key areas such as the quality of teaching and learning, the appropriateness of curriculum provision and pupil attainment and progress data. Nevertheless, they are now poised to make a more effective contribution in driving school improvement.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels – **inadequate**
- Improve the school's governance – **inadequate**

### **External support**

Staff continue to receive local authority consultant support to develop their teaching, planning and the curriculum. At this stage, with the exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is little evidence of the impact of these actions even though some time has elapsed since their inception. The local authority has brokered the extended secondment of the assistant headteacher and the appointment of the acting deputy headteacher. The local authority is also periodically monitoring and challenging the progress the school is making in addressing the key issues from the last section 5 inspection. Links with the partner school have been limited. Middle leaders have visited the partner school to discuss roles and responsibilities with their counterparts with a view to identifying best practice and boosting their effectiveness.