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24 January 2011

Mrs D Liversidge
Headteacher
Earby Springfield Primary School
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Dear Mrs Liversidge

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Earby Springfield Primary School

Following my visit with Mrs Jane Millward HMI to your school on 25 and 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 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 – **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 Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Ms Sonya Williamson
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

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

- Raise attainment to the national average by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations of pupils' abilities and that the targets for which pupils strive reflect this
 - planning and delivering lessons and activities which take into account the full range of pupils' needs, interests and abilities
 - developing teaching strategies that promote good achievement
 - developing effective strategies to identify and support pupils quickly if they begin to underachieve
 - developing the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so it better reflects the full range of children's needs and interests.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels have greater impact on the school's effectiveness by:
 - ensuring that the governing body understands and fulfils all statutory responsibilities, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils' well-being and equalities
 - prioritising actions for school improvement and agreeing measurable success criteria
 - increasing the rigour of the systems that monitor and evaluate the impact of actions on provision and outcomes
 - making expectations clear and accountability rigorous
 - nurturing the potential of senior and middle leaders through well-targeted professional development
 - increasing the rigour with which the governing body holds the school to account for its performance.
- Strengthen other areas of provision by:
 - reversing the downward trend in attendance through carefully targeted intervention involving pupils and their parents
 - developing a clear communication and engagement strategy with parents and carers so they develop confidence in the work of the school
 - setting clear guidelines for all staff regarding safeguarding and the reporting of incidents.

Special measures: monitoring of Earby Springfield Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection from 25 and 26 January 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' work and met with the headteacher, the two assistant headteachers, subject coordinators and other staff, two groups of pupils, parents and carers, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Another governor took part in discussions by telephone.

Context

There have been some staffing changes since the last monitoring visit. The seconded deputy headteacher has completed her time at the school. One member of staff is on maternity leave and another is on sick leave. Their classes are being taught by supply teachers. The school was closed for a short period at the start of the spring term due to flooding caused by numerous burst pipes.

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

Pupils' attainment remains below the national average and the pace of their progress has not accelerated consistently since the last monitoring inspection. There is too much variation in the quality of pupils' learning and progress between year groups and subjects, and between different groups of pupils. The school is not yet analysing sufficiently the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils and then acting upon the findings. School data indicate that more pupils are on track to attain the national expectation of Level 4 at the end of Year 6 than was the case at this time last year. Pupils are progressing better in mathematics in several classes but writing remains the weakest area. The interventions that have taken place to accelerate the progress of pupils who were identified as at risk of underachievement have not been successful except for a small number of pupils and there are groups of pupils who made no progress in the autumn term.

In a good literacy session observed, pupils made good progress because the teacher made strong use of prior attainment data and displayed keen awareness of individual pupils' needs and interests. Pupils knew their learning targets and used them well to support their writing. The teacher's individual interventions both supported and challenged pupils to extend their understanding and enabled her to assess their learning. The pupils' clear enjoyment of this motivating lesson helped all groups of pupils to achieve well. In too many lessons, despite the planning showing different tasks for pupils of higher and lower abilities, the quality of teaching and the questioning did not lead to sufficient progress. In the first part of a less-effective mathematics lesson, higher-attaining pupils were finding the work too easy and

lost concentration and lower-attaining pupils struggled to understand the task because the explanation was too rapid.

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

- Raise attainment to the national average – **inadequate**

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils continue to behave well in lessons, even where the teaching is not stimulating. However, their levels of enjoyment are low in lessons where they say the topics, tasks and resources are not stimulating or where teachers are not fully taking into account their learning needs. Pupils express their views clearly, for example, saying that they would like the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking comments, and show empathetic understanding for the needs of others indicating their developing social and moral understanding. They value the improvements to the safety of the school site. Several pupils were successful in a national poetry competition and others have contributed well to the school's links with the local community. They are caring and thoughtful.

Pupils' rates of attendance have fallen since the last monitoring inspection. Problems linked to pupils' accessing school during late autumn snow, severe sickness and the flooding of the school resulted in low attendance in particular weeks but there have been weeks when attendance has been above average. The school has maintained its emphasis on improving attendance through links with parents and carers, partnership working with the local authority, consistency of approach and the use of rewards for pupils.

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

- Reverse the downward trend in attendance – **satisfactory**

The effectiveness of provision

Staffing changes have contributed to augmented inconsistency in the quality of teaching. As at the last monitoring visit, the teaching observed included satisfactory and good teaching but the proportion that was inadequate has increased. Weaker teaching seen was characterised by combinations of the following: low expectations of pupils; imprecise use of assessment data to plan questions, strategies and tasks for groups of pupils and individuals; lack of pace and challenge; inconsistent use of targets; and a lack of stimulating resources and topics for investigation. In a good design and technology lesson, the teacher showed strong subject knowledge in the planning of the lesson so that expectations and levels of challenge were high. Practical group work encouraged the pupils to develop their independent learning skills and teamwork. Pupils could confidently explain the purpose of their work; they challenged each other and shared ideas. The teacher planned differentiated support for pupils' literacy so that their recording of their investigations and technological understanding was not limited. Questions used in the teacher's interventions skilfully encouraged pupils to test their ideas and the focus on subject vocabulary was strong.

The marking of pupils' work is too inconsistent. Some marking uses the school system of a comment of praise and a target for improvement well. In other books marking was intermittent and not well linked to pupils' learning targets for literacy and numeracy. Marking comments in the foundation subjects lack subject specificity.

The curriculum has not been adapted sufficiently well to meet pupils' needs and interests. Changes to the curriculum are planned to make it more relevant to pupils, to make meaningful links between topics and to promote creativity. As yet, these plans are in their infancy but individual teachers have piloted ideas that have been developed through discussions with pupils in their classes. Accurate assessment data are used to track pupils' progress and the school has recently introduced a national system to assess pupils' progress in terms of the small steps they make in learning in different subjects. Pupils now have more precise literacy and numeracy targets. However, assessment information is not used well enough by teachers to identify specific strengths and weaknesses of groups of pupils and use it to inform their planning and teaching. Intervention groups are now appropriately identified from tracking information in both literacy and numeracy and analysis has identified the inconsistencies in outcomes. Leaders and managers are not aware of why the interventions have had such limited success. Staffing difficulties have meant that some planned interventions have had to be delayed.

Too little progress has been made in improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although the local authority has continued to provide appropriate support. The learning environment is not sufficiently stimulating and children are insufficiently challenged. Children's learning is too often unfocused and much is overly teacher directed. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is not promoted well. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage does not have an accurate understanding of pupil outcomes in order to help planning for improvement.

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

- improve the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations of pupils and ensuring teaching is better matched to pupils' needs, interests and abilities – **inadequate**
- develop strategies to identify and support pupils who fall behind – **satisfactory**
- develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage – **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Governors have continued to develop their ability to challenge the school as well as continuing to provide valued support. They are much more aware of what information they need to obtain in order to hold the school to account. They understand that data need careful interrogation if they are to be helpful for school improvement and that they now need to support the school in its monitoring of progress against the improvement plan. They

have continued to strengthen the school's safeguarding procedures and have analysed data about accidents and incidents and taken action.

Partnerships with parents and carers have continued to progress. The parents and carers spoken to during this inspection feel that all the staff are accessible, approachable and that their concerns are listened to. They particularly praised the support for pupils who have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They have some concerns about the range of communication opportunities used by the school. The school has sought parents' and carers' views through questionnaires but is not yet informing them about the outcomes and intended actions. The school is trying to vary the times at which it runs specific information and consultation sessions for parents and carers so that more are able to attend.

The headteacher has ensured that individual action plans are now in place for senior and middle leaders who report, as a result, that they now have a clearer picture of what tasks they need to do. The plans are focused on the correct priorities. A monitoring schedule has been developed to track progress with improvement. However, the programme has not been fully adhered to. Simple work scrutiny and planning checks have been undertaken as well as a small number of lesson observations but no use has been made of pupil discussion groups. Middle leaders have valued local authority support to get started with these aspects. They have aptly identified appropriate professional development opportunities to help them further with their work. Evaluation of what strengths and weaknesses have been identified as a result of the monitoring has been too informal and feedback has lacked rigour so that staff are left unclear as to what they are expected to do next.

Middle and senior leaders are not clear about the responsibilities associated with their roles because they have not been adequately involved in the formulation of plans. They respond to tasks but, overall, do not take enough initiative to help them on their journeys to becoming leaders with responsibility for the achievement of pupils. The examples of best practice in carrying out leadership roles and the stronger aspects of teaching identified from monitoring are not shared and celebrated sufficiently to enhance provision and outcomes. Communications about roles and responsibilities lack clarity. Some of this is due to confusion about success criteria, monitoring and actions and how they differ. The policy for teaching and learning does not place sufficient emphasis on the role of subject coordinators. Although staff are held to account for the progress of pupils in their classes through discussions, agreed strategies for moving forward are not formally recorded so that it is difficult for the headteacher to pursue accountability rigorously. Staff, including middle and senior leaders, are clear that they have moved forward with the collation of tracking data. Nevertheless, they have conflicting views about who has responsibility for subject and key stage data analysis, communication of key messages and the subsequent cycle of action planning and monitoring. Senior leadership team meetings are also too informal. They are not sufficiently focused on the key priorities for improvement. Consequently, there has been too little progress with these since the last monitoring inspection. These weaknesses result in a lack of impact on improving teaching and learning and, subsequently, on pupils' rates of progress.

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

- Ensure the governing body fulfils its responsibilities and rigorously holds the school to account – **satisfactory**
- Improve systems for and the impact of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning – **satisfactory**
- Improve the impact of senior and middle leadership through clarifying expectations, targeting professional development and ensuring accountability – **inadequate**
- Strengthen safeguarding procedures – **satisfactory**
- Improve partnerships with parents and carers – **satisfactory**

External support

The local authority has provided satisfactory support to the school since the last monitoring inspection. It has continued to support the school in the management of staffing, although there have been difficulties regarding the arrangements for supply teachers. Training and professional development opportunities have been provided for staff and for governors and these have been tailored appropriately to need. The brokering of a partnership with another local school is helping to support the development of improved practice. The local authority responded quickly to the problems caused by flooding this term in order to minimise the time pupils were not able to attend. Support for school self-evaluation and improvement planning is helping to build capacity for improvement but has had less impact.