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10 March 2011

Ms Penny Dobson  
Headteacher  
Orchard Head Lane  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire  
WF8 2NJ

Dear Ms Dobson

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Pontefract Orchard Head Junior and Infant School**

Following my visit with Lyn Field, additional inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 March 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 – 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

James Kilner  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex**

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

- Rapidly improve pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan appropriately for the needs of all pupils
  - holding all teachers fully to account for the progress made by pupils in their care
  - developing the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils
  - increasing the impact of monitoring by middle and senior leaders on what happens routinely in the classrooms.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body in challenging the school to improve by:
  - holding leaders and staff fully to account for pupils' progress and attainment
  - ensuring that rigorous and systematic evaluation fully informs strategic planning
  - making sure that all governors take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating how successfully the school meets the needs of all learners.
  
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management on school performance by:
  - improving teaching to consistently good or better by the end of the 2010/11 academic year
  - ensuring that realistically challenging targets are set for pupils so they know how to improve further
  - ensuring monitoring processes are sufficiently rigorous and effective in improving outcomes for all pupils.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Pontefract Orchard Head Junior and Infant School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 March 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents; met with the headteacher, consultant headteacher and senior members of staff; the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors did not look at the Early Years Foundation Stage on this inspection as its overall effectiveness had been judged to be good at the time of the inspection in November 2010.

#### **Context**

Since the previous inspection the role of the consultant headteacher has been enhanced so as to provide a greater degree of challenge and support to the senior leadership team. Most significantly, the previous governing body has been disbanded by the local authority and an interim executive board set up. At the time of the monitoring visit the Chair of the IEB has attended joint meetings with the school and local authority, however, their first scheduled board meeting takes place following the monitoring visit. Over the course of this academic year four new teachers have taken up post. The school's management structure has been reviewed since the substantive deputy headteacher stepped down from duties. An existing member of staff has been appointed as an assistant headteacher. The member of staff who is both subject leader for English and the Key Stage 2 Learning Leader is new to their post.

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

Inspection evidence indicates that the proportion of pupils making at least satisfactory progress is improving. In some lessons there are examples of more accelerated rates of progress, linked to the improved quality of teaching. Equally, more accurate assessment information on pupils is more consistently being used to hold teachers to account for pupils in their care. However, pockets of inadequate progress remain and attainment is still too low. This is a priority area in the school action plan and a well-organised structure for additional support for individuals identified as falling behind in literacy and numeracy is now well established. Progress and attainment in mathematics, particularly in Year 4, remain low. The creation of smaller classes in this year group is designed to provide more focused teaching for these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified earlier and receive more targeted support so that their rates of progress are also

showing signs of improvement. The majority of pupils, including some of the youngest ones, now understand their individual targets and know how to reach the next level in their work.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Rapidly improve pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics – satisfactory

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' attendance and their behaviour continue to be good. In more successful lessons pupils' willingness to cooperate, share ideas and work with others ensures a harmonious working atmosphere conducive to learning. Pupils enjoy the range of sporting and other enrichment opportunities after school, some made possible by the appointment of new staff. They take pride in their work and are eager to speak of their individual achievements.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Senior leaders have set a benchmark of expectations for all teachers which are non-negotiable. This promotes consistency in basic classroom management and the marking of pupils' work. In more successful lessons, which are of a practical nature, pupils are encouraged to be independent, discover for themselves and are clear about how they could improve their work. However, there are still lessons where teaching is less successful and progress slows. In these instances more-able pupils are insufficiently challenged, time is not used effectively and teacher input dominates lessons, leaving little time for pupils to practise and consolidate skills being taught.

Teachers' planning identifies more consistently the differing activities to be undertaken by the pupils in relation to the learning objective. While this ensures a better match of pupils' abilities to tasks, it does not focus sharply enough on what exactly pupils are to learn in relation to their individual and group targets. Consequently, teaching is not as successful as it could be in moving pupils to the next levels in their learning.

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum with input from pupils to make it more creative. It is being trialled in three year groups. There are some indications that pupils are more interested in their learning, but it is too early to discern any impact on their outcomes. This will be reviewed at the end of the summer term before making decisions as to the next steps in its development.

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

All leaders, teachers and external partners fully accept the need to bring about improvements and are committed to ensuring the school's timely removal from special measures. Action planning has appropriate and challenging time scales. Members of the IEB bring recognisable strengths to the level of challenge to and support for the school. Indeed, despite not having met as a group, the chair has a thorough understanding of the identified weaknesses and a keen eye as to how monitoring against success criteria will take place. Senior leaders have not shirked from their responsibility to tackle deep-seated weaknesses in the school, taking firm action where necessary. Equally, they are using the skills of experienced and talented staff already in the school to better effect. For example, the successful leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, recognised for the good quality of leadership at the last inspection, monitors teaching and learning in the Key Stage 1 classes.

Monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic and senior leaders have already identified the need for staff training in the effective use of assessment data. Lines of accountability for pupils' progress are much clearer with staff accepting the role they have to play in raising attainment for the pupils in their care. Plans are in place to develop the role of middle leaders in monitoring pupils' progress and teaching.

With the support of the local authority, the school's assessment manager has developed a very effective tracking system to record and monitor pupils' progress. Together with the outcomes from lesson monitoring, senior leaders have instigated a timetable of progress meetings to discuss pupils' achievements. This serves to ensure increased levels of accountability of individual teachers for the outcomes for their pupils. The assistant headteacher has a specific role in coaching and modelling good practice and key staff appointments have been made to strengthen the profile of teaching and learning.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body in challenging the school to improve –satisfactory
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management on school performance –satisfactory

## **External support**

After the inspection in November 2010 the local authority submitted an action plan to the Department for Education outlining how it would improve the school. This plan was judged by Ofsted to be fit for purpose. The plan has identified relevant priorities, although slight amendments to timeline for teaching and learning have been agreed with Ofsted. The school is on target to meet the revised deadlines. The support of the local authority and other partners is good, assisting in the recruitment

of key external partners as well as successful teachers from other schools in the area.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Accelerate pupils' progress by using good quality assessment information to tailor planning that meets pupils' individual needs.