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30 March 2011

Mrs S. Heath  
Interim headteacher  
Ash Grange Primary School  
Ash Church Road  
Ash  
Aldershot  
Hampshire  
GU12 6LX

Dear Mrs Heath

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Ash Grange Primary School**

Following my visit with Liz Konnou, additional inspector, to your school on 10 and 11 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 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 – 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 Interim Executive Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

James Henry  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Ensure that leaders, managers and the governing body take steps urgently to accelerate the pace of improvement by:
  - evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour
  - monitoring all initiatives carefully so that effective practice becomes embedded and inconsistencies are eliminated.
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that:
  - all entries in the school's single central record are complete and up-to-date by the end of December 2010
  - all other weaknesses pertaining to safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully addressed by the beginning of March 2011.
- By July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics by:
  - setting higher expectations in lessons for pupils' achievement and their rates of working
  - improving the guidance for pupils, particularly through marking which better indicates the next steps in their learning and make more rigorous use of learning targets
  - clarify the roles of teaching assistants so that they support pupils' learning effectively and consistently well
  - paying more attention to pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 and 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys.
- Improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Ash Grange Primary School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 March 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, observed lessons and examined pupils' work. Inspectors also met with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

At the time of the last inspection, the substantive headteacher was on compassionate leave, with the school being led by an interim headteacher. The substantive headteacher has now resigned and the interim headteacher is still leading the school on a part-time basis. The governing body has been replaced by an Interim Executive Board led by an experienced governor who was the interim Chair of the Governing Body at the time of the last inspection. The Interim Executive Board, supported by the local authority, has taken steps to fill the vacant post of headteacher on a permanent basis from September 2011. The interim arrangements already in place will continue during the summer term. There have been no other significant staff changes since the last inspection, although one teacher has left the school.

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

Attainment remains low and generally below the levels expected for the pupils' ages across both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, especially in writing. The school has changed the system for monitoring pupils' progress and this is beginning to provide an accurate assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. This has not been in place long enough to give a picture of progress over time but present data show that pupils are making inadequate progress in English and mathematics across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This is also the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more-able pupils. Although pupils continue to enjoy their time at school, there remains a legacy of underachievement. This was clearly seen in lessons and from observing pupils' work. In English lessons across Key Stage 2, for example, pupils were able to verbally articulate their ideas in preparing to write in different genres but evidence in their books showed a lack of perseverance and care in their written work. In a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson on counting in different number patterns, some pupils were able to work independently but their written formation of numbers was consistently inaccurate.

## **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection reflecting the commitment of staff to engage and work with teachers from another school. However, behaviour has still not improved enough to prevent some low-level disruption continuing to slow the pace of learning. A few pupils, particularly some boys, are not engaged in their learning, especially in whole-class activities. While staff often effectively manage pupils' behaviour, there is no consistent, whole-school approach to dealing with behaviour issues. This results in teachers spending too much time dealing with low-level disruption rather than supporting pupils' learning.

The level of attendance has not improved since the previous inspection. The school has put some procedures in place, such as a pupil reward system, to promote good attendance but this has not had a significant impact on raising the overall level of attendance. The Home School Worker has been involved with a few pupils who were persistent absentees and this has improved their individual attendance rates.

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

- Develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys – inadequate
- Improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011 – inadequate

## **The effectiveness of provision**

The large majority of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory with a small minority of lessons being inadequate. Staff are committed to working with staff from another school and English and mathematics consultants and other outside agencies to improve their teaching. Lessons are planned to cater for the needs of different groups of pupils and staff are working hard to motivate and engage pupils in their learning and are increasing their own expectations of the standard of pupils' work. However, pupils sometimes lack the motivation to learn as shown by some inattentive behaviour during the introduction to lessons and the need for staff to constantly ensure pupils are focusing on the task they are given. There are still too many gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and too much teaching that is not good enough to ensure that past underachievement is addressed.

Whilst there is evidence in pupils' books that work is marked regularly with comments about how pupils could improve their work, this is inconsistent. Pupils are not consistently responding to or understanding the guidance given in their books and hence the quality of their presentation and content of work, particularly in

writing, is not improving. Due to a change in the assessment procedures used to track pupils' progress, staff have a more accurate assessment of the levels at which pupils work. However, they are not consistently using this to set targets and help particularly the older and more-able pupils understand how they can work to raise their own attainment.

The effectiveness of teaching assistants in supporting pupils learning remains inconsistent. They are often deployed effectively when given responsibilities for groups of pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, during the activity part of a lesson. However, teaching assistants often spend the introduction in lessons managing pupils' behaviour, rather than supporting their learning.

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

- By July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics – inadequate

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

Senior leaders are effectively using the local authority action plan and their own self-evaluation to focus on areas for improvement; they have raised staff expectations and aspirations that have maintained teacher morale. However, between them senior leaders do not have the time to deal with all the management tasks and monitor rigorously and consistently, the initiatives recently put in place to bring about improvement. Only the interim headteacher, in conjunction with the local authority adviser, has undertaken the monitoring of teaching and learning. The role of middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibilities and holding staff to account remains underdeveloped and this impedes the school's capacity to evaluate its performance with greater rigour. While the staff are a cohesive team that are working hard and committed to improvement, the impact of their work has not had sufficient time to raise pupils' attainment and increase the rates of progress.

The Interim Executive Board, supported by the local authority and the interim headteacher, has been effective in addressing the safeguarding issues identified at the last inspection. There are clear management responsibilities in relation to child protection with relevant senior staff designated to deal with any concerns. There are satisfactory safeguarding policies and procedures in place with good improvements in ensuring pupils are safe on site.

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

- Ensure that leaders and managers and the governing body take urgent steps to accelerate the pace of improvement by evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour and monitoring all initiatives carefully so that effective practice becomes embedded and all inconsistencies are eliminated – inadequate
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that all entries into the school's single central record are complete by the end of December 2010 and all other weaknesses pertaining to safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully addressed by the beginning of March 2011 – satisfactory

### **External support**

The local authority provided considerable support before the school was judged as needing special measures. Their statement of action is fit for purpose and provides an appropriate framework for action and is being followed closely by the advisers and consultants who are working with the school. The local authority acted appropriately in appointing an interim headteacher. However, the impact of the considerable support provided by the local authority's literacy and numeracy consultants has yet to be fully seen. Some of the immediate actions identified in the statement of action have been effectively carried out and have made a satisfactory contribution to school improvement, particularly in regard to the safeguarding of pupils. The local authority acknowledges the need to appoint an appropriate substantive headteacher to lead the necessary initiatives to raise attainment and improve the quality of teaching and learning.