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18 March 2011

Mrs Alison Nettleship  
The Headteacher  
Weston Mill Community Primary School  
Ferndale Road  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL2 2EL

Dear Mrs Nettleship

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Weston Mill Community Primary School**

Following my visit with Mary Usher-Clark, additional inspector, to your school on 16 and 17 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 September 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 – 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 Plymouth.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- In order to raise attainment and accelerate progress, improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that assessment information is used consistently to plan lessons at the appropriate level for pupils' ages and abilities.
- Develop the effectiveness of leadership by:
  - ensuring all staff with leadership roles have the skills to carry them out and fully understand their accountabilities
  - ensuring assessment information is accurate and used more rigorously to track the progress of all groups of pupils from their starting points, and to set challenging targets
  - rigorously monitoring and driving improvement in the quality of teaching.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Weston Mill Community Primary School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 March 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other staff, two governors, including the chair, a senior adviser from the local authority, a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 and the parent champion.

#### **Context**

There are some temporary changes in the teaching staff. Two teachers are currently on maternity leave and their classes are being taught by temporary staff. An additional temporary teacher has been employed so that Year 6 pupils can be taught in separate classes in the period up to the national tests in English and mathematics in May.

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

The school is keen to accelerate pupils' progress rapidly so that as many as possible reach the standards expected in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The school's data show that there has been an improvement in the progress made by Year 6 pupils since the inspection and that progress in English by the end of Year 6 looks set to be better than that made by Year 6 pupils in 2010. However, progress in mathematics is on track to be similar to that of 2010. There is significant ground to be made up to address past gaps in pupils' learning, for example in problem solving and calculation in mathematics where boys have particular weaknesses. As there has been insufficient time to address this fully, attainment remains below what is expected nationally in English and mathematics. Separate Year 6 teaching groups have just been established in order to boost attainment and progress further before national tests in May. Progress is variable in the rest of the school. For example, there has been a steady overall improvement in Years 2 and 3 but, although pupils in Years 4 and 5 have made better progress in writing, improvement in mathematics is stubbornly slow.

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

- raise attainment and accelerate progress – satisfactory.

#### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

The school is a calm and orderly community. Pupils' behaviour remains good and their attitude to improving their work is very positive. Pupils get on well together in classrooms and around the school. Those interviewed clearly enjoy school and stated that targets are very helpful to them in improving the standard of their work.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

The headteacher and staff have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A new lesson planning format has been introduced for English and mathematics and teachers often annotate plans with useful information about how well pupils have responded to activities in lessons. A programme of lesson observations by the headteacher and other senior leaders has resulted in clearly identified strengths and areas for development that have been followed up with opportunities for professional development. For example, an advanced skills teacher has worked with individuals and teams of teachers on particular issues. Lesson observations have been complemented by scrutinies of teachers' planning and of pupils' work as well as by more informal visits to lessons.

Actions taken are starting to bear fruit in lessons. Some good teaching was observed, with high expectations of pupils' progress and a brisk pace in learning that met pupils' needs well. A focus on developing teachers' skills in assessing pupils' learning was having a positive impact in lessons observed. The new approach to teaching phonics and literacy in Years 1 and 2 was clearly making more efficient use of the lesson time. The data gathered by the school and the local authority show that teaching is improving. Most of the teaching observed by inspectors showed some impact of the school's actions and was satisfactory overall. There was increasing attention to meeting the varying needs of pupils, but the pace of learning was sometimes too leisurely and there were some missed opportunities to extend pupils' learning in other than the best lessons.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory.

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

The headteacher's strong commitment to the rapid improvement of the school is increasingly widely shared by the staff. The improvement plan is now a senior leadership document and depends less on the headteacher's initiative. Training has been provided for middle leaders and, as a result, the role of the team leaders and of the English and mathematics coordinators has been strengthened. The teams of teachers are making an increasing contribution to the school's self-evaluation. The literacy and numeracy coordinators are involved in monitoring pupils' progress through regular meetings, as well as in checking teachers' planning and scrutinising pupils' work. They are shortly to participate in observing teaching and learning in the classrooms. The governing body has undertaken extensive training and governors' visits to the school at work now take place before every meeting. Governors are increasingly well informed by these activities and are now better placed to ask leaders questions about the school's performance.

New software to assist in tracking pupils' progress has been introduced and data can be interrogated easily to check the progress of individuals and of different groups. Regular testing and detailed discussions of standards of pupils' work in writing are improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments. The system is being used well to track progress towards targets and informs regular adjustments to the grouping of pupils for their learning in English and mathematics.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- develop the effectiveness of leadership – good.

### **External support**

The local authority's support for the school is good. Its statement of action met requirements and contributed usefully to planning swiftly how weaknesses were to be addressed. Support has been tailored well to the needs of the school in its quest for rapid improvement. For example, a link facilitated with a nearby school has provided additional advice for the headteacher and assistance with training for middle leaders has been provided.