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20 March 2011

Mr Paul Slater  
Associate Headteacher  
Trumacar Community Primary School  
Combermere Road  
Higher Heysham  
Morecambe  
Lancashire  
LA3 2ST

Dear Mr Slater,

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Trumacar Community Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you, the associate adviser and staff gave when I inspected Trumacar School on 22 March 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass my thanks to all the staff, local authority advisers, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils who gave up their time to talk about the school.

Since the last inspection, two new members of staff have joined the school, teaching in Year 5 and the mixed Year 1/2 class. The Year 5 teacher has moved to Year 3. There is a new Chair of the Governing Body.

As a result of the inspection on 14-15 July 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management have not improved sufficiently and the school does not have capacity to sustain further improvement without the significant external support. Improvement since the last inspection has been too slow because of a lack of continuity and a clear steer from leadership. The local authority has provided consultant support to leadership since September and early in the Spring term brokered additional support from an experienced Headteacher to work one day a week with the school. It has very recently appointed an additional full-time associate headteacher, who has previously worked successfully with staff, to lead the school in the absence of the headteacher. These interim arrangements have ensured that the school continues to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Teaching staff have embraced opportunities for professional development enthusiastically and have worked successfully to ensure that pupils enjoy and achieve, are safe and well cared for. The governing body is taking appropriate steps to secure greater stability.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The deputy headteacher, subject and phase leaders are developing their knowledge and leadership skills with good support from advisers, consultants and the associate headteacher. They have been supported in subject action planning, staff development and work scrutiny, all of which are helping to improve the quality of provision. However, their role in strategic planning, monitoring and whole-school self-evaluation is at very early stages and they are not yet leading developments independently.

Performance management procedures have improved with the introduction of personal targets. Most staff reviews have been effectively led by the senior leadership team and are up to date, although senior leaders have not completed the full cycle of their own performance management. The introduction of pupils' progress reviews has supported teachers in identifying and planning support for any pupils who might be underachieving. Despite the good start, however, the meetings have not been held regularly. Teachers still lack clarity about their roles and responsibilities in raising achievement and improving the school.

Inspection evidence confirmed the local authority findings that the overall quality of teaching has improved. Better planning, assessment and marking have ensured that activities are more accurately matched to pupils' learning needs and ability. The most-effective teaching helps pupils to reflect on their learning so they fully understand how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants are deployed much more effectively in lessons and more appropriately during teachers' allocated planning time away from the class. Pupils generally enjoy lessons but feel that some could be more exciting and work could be more challenging. Inspection evidence endorses their views. Opportunities for them to make decisions about their learning and develop skills independently are sometimes limited. Pupils have increased opportunities for extended independent writing, which is helping them to practise key skills although writing across the curriculum remains a key priority for further development.

As a result of the improvements to teaching, the majority of pupils are making expected progress in lessons in most year groups. Their progress was more uneven in the past and attainment has been variable due to inconsistent teaching. Pupils have historically made better progress in mathematics because reading and writing skills have not been as well taught. Good quality professional development is improving teachers' knowledge so that the gap is closing. Current standards, as indicated in pupils' work and through the school's progress tracking, are broadly in line with age-related expectations.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They say that behaviour has improved. They are keen to play their part to ensure the revised behaviour code is upheld. Pupils on the school council have many interesting and practical ideas to improve the school but feel frustrated because their suggestions have not been taken forward. Pupils have limited opportunities to contribute to the running of the school and take responsibility.

Parents and carers have similarly expressed that they would like to be more involved in the school and better informed about how well their children are doing. Some good work has been started with the establishment of a parents' forum and pursuit of the 'Leading Parent Partnership Award'. A detailed action plan is being implemented with the aim of improving communication, reporting and involvement of all parents and carers. Although in the early stages of implementation, it provides a good foundation for further improvement.

The local authority statement of action was evaluated by one of HMI in October 2010. It fulfilled all requirements and was judged fit for purpose. The local authority has provided good support since the school was given a notice to improve at its last inspection. The support has been well received by teachers and has helped to ensure that pupils continue to enjoy and achieve. However, it has not been successful in securing the capacity to sustain further improvement in the school's leadership.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 14-15 July 2010**

- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management, by:
  - ensuring that all staff share the same vision for the school and participate fully in the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning process
  - developing effective strategies to build and utilise the skills of phase leaders and subject leaders in leading and monitoring performance
  - widening opportunities for the school's leaders to consult with staff, pupils and governors.
  
- Raise further pupils' enjoyment, achievement and progress by:
  - introducing strategies for promoting writing across the school and accelerating the reduction in the gap between boys' and girls' performance, particularly in English
  - developing strategies that enable pupils to work independently and to be involved in making decisions about their learning
  - sharing the good practice in teaching within the school so that the rate of pupils' progress is consistently good
  - deploying teaching assistants more effectively and making better use of their skills to meet the needs of pupils.
  
- Improve the way in which the school engages with parents and carers, by involving them more in the work of the school and canvassing and acting upon their views on how the school can improve the quality of its provision.