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25 March 2011

Mrs E Ford  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Ford

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Bridgewater Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 and 24 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2009. 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

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 Salford.

Yours sincerely

Ms Angela Westington  
Her Majesty's Inspector



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 16 September 2009**

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - providing further training for teachers to enable them to update their skills and develop an understanding of how to assess pupils' achievement in lessons
  - providing pupils with work which is based on their prior attainment and challenges them to improve
  - increase the pace of lessons through setting higher expectations of what pupils can do and understand, and of the quality and quantity of pupils' work.
  
- Ensure that pupils make much better progress and attain higher standards by:
  - involving them more in their own learning and assessment
  - using the information gained from checking on pupils' progress to set challenging personal targets.
  
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
  - producing a whole-school curriculum which plans a systematic progression of the skills and knowledge pupils need across different subjects and over time
  - ensure that planning fully meets all pupils' needs.
  
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
  - making leaders and managers, at all levels, more accountable for the performance of the school.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Bridgewater Primary School**

### **Report from the fourth monitoring inspection from 23 to 24 March 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed 16 lessons or part lessons, scrutinised a wide range of documents, spoke to pupils and met with the headteacher and staff, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, the deputy headteacher has resigned and a new substantive deputy headteacher has been appointed to take up post at the beginning of the summer term. A consultant teacher, on secondment from the local authority, is teaching the Year 3 class in the interim.

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

Standards across the school continue to rise and are now broadly average overall. The school continues to eat into the underachievement that existed previously. Currently, gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are most evident in the Year 4 and 5 classes; the two year groups that have had the most disrupted teaching history.

Standards are rising most rapidly in reading. The school's efforts to improve reading have paid dividends. Pupils are making good and, in some cases, outstanding progress in their reading as a result of the intensive focus by the school. In each year group, there are now a sizeable proportion of pupils who are very able readers and the proportion of pupils who have reading ages below their chronological ages is declining significantly. Even those pupils whose reading age is still below their chronological age are making rapid progress and the deficit in their reading is reducing. As reading standards improve, the school is able to identify more accurately those pupils with the potential to achieve even higher levels. The challenge for the school now is to ensure that this group is working at appropriate levels across the curriculum. The school's more-robust analysis and monitoring of standards now allow it to identify more accurately those pupils genuinely in need of support for a special educational need and to cater better for them. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or a disability are making good progress too.

Standards in pupils' writing continue to improve. Pupils are writing more, in a wider variety of styles, more frequently. A benefit of pupils' wider and improved reading is that they have more to write about and more ideas to draw upon. Younger pupils and less-able pupils are receiving more direct instruction about sentence construction to good effect. Teachers' marking of pupils' writing is more consistent and more accurately focused on the level achieved. Pupils now have individual 'Target Passports' which spell out what they have to do

next to improve their writing. However, there remain persistent errors and weaknesses in aspects of pupils' writing such as spelling, handwriting, punctuation and presentation that become habituated because these are not corrected by teachers. For example, even when a new spelling or letter sound is taught, pupils' inaccurate spellings of these are not corrected.

Standards in mathematics are also improving following the school's recent focus on this subject. However, there remain many gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially in Years 4 and 5. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on area and perimeter, it became clear that many pupils did not understand that area is a measurement of surface coverage and why we use standard units of measurement, squares, to measure it. Further discussion revealed that the pupils had not had the practical measuring experience in lower Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1 expected of a well-planned mathematics curriculum.

Standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage continue to rise as children in the Nursery and Reception classes make more rapid progress than those in previous cohorts. The school's own half yearly analysis of children's outcomes shows that this year the majority of children in both classes are reaching milestones earlier. This is borne out by, for example, the number of children in Reception class who are now reading, compared with the figures in previous years and the number in Nursery who have learnt initial letter sounds. The children are achieving better in almost all outcomes across all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage than in previous years.

Most encouragingly, in the lessons observed, there were high levels of enjoyment and engagement. It is especially notable that boys are showing enthusiasm for their lessons and are taking pride in their work. For example, while in the Reception class the inspector observed three boys poring over a pile of writing books. When asked what they were doing they replied, 'Looking at our books; these are our books'. One said excitedly, 'I love my writing book!' and insisted that the inspector look at his work. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, a boy sitting next to the inspector exclaimed, 'I love divides!'

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

- Ensure that pupils make much better progress and attain higher standards – good

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils are consistently well behaved, happy and friendly. They initiate conversations with adults, are welcoming and eager to learn. They are beginning to take on more roles of responsibility within the school.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The inspector observed a broader range of subjects than on previous visits. One lesson was outstanding, 10 were good and five satisfactory. A consistently stronger profile of teaching is being established across the school.

The quality of teaching in the core subjects of English and mathematics is stronger than in other subjects. This is mainly because more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in these other subjects. Nevertheless, there are some consistent features in the teaching which are contributing to its overall improvement. These include:

- the consistency of teachers’ planning
- the sharper focus on assessing pupils’ progress
- teachers’ higher expectations of what pupils can achieve
- clear and unambiguous whole-school systems for teaching subjects, to which all staff must adhere

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken, led by the Year 6 teacher, to improve the curriculum. The impact of this work is evident in classrooms and around the school; for example, the eye-catching pupils’ work on painters and textiles which decorate the corridors. There is now a detailed whole-school curriculum plan underpinned by year group plans, half termly units of work and long-term subject plans, which provide clear structure to the school’s work and meets National Curriculum requirements.

Much effective work has been done to overhaul the school’s systems for monitoring and safeguarding those pupils most vulnerable to underachievement. Records on individual pupils are very well kept.

Teachers continue to undertake professional development. The teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage recently visited an outstanding school in a neighbouring authority, renowned for its success in teaching children to read, to gather further ideas for improving the Bridgewater provision. Other teachers have worked alongside local authority consultants to improve their teaching in mathematics and English.

Work to improve the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues. The outside area is currently being upgraded with storage for outdoor play equipment and raised garden beds.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – good
- Improve the quality of the curriculum – good

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

The headteacher continues to provide strong leadership and drives forward the necessary changes. She is pivotal to the school’s continuing improvement. Leadership at other levels is developing, particularly the roles of curriculum manager and special needs coordinator and the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the school still lacks a substantive deputy headteacher and much responsibility still rests on the shoulders of the headteacher.

The programme of monitoring activities remains strong. In mathematics, pupils' books and teachers' planning have been scrutinised, meetings taken place to discuss pupils' progress and lessons observed. As a result, further professional development has been provided for staff and changes to the structure of lessons have been put in place.

The school is extending its links with other schools in the locality, working in partnership to improve further aspects of its provision. Development work in science and in information and communication technology is underway.

Staff morale remains high. The IEB is preparing to establish a shadow governing body.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management – good

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide good support. Since the previous monitoring visit the support has included: the provision of a consultant teacher to work in Year 3 pending the arrival of the new deputy headteacher; additional funding for resources; a programme of six week support from an advanced skills mathematics teacher, working alongside Key Stage 2 teachers; and support and training from a literacy consultant for two Key Stage 2 teachers.

The School Improvement Partner has an accurate view of the school and provides good support and challenge.