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30 June 11

Ms P Dobson  
Headteacher  
Pontefract Orchard Head Junior and Infant School  
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 to your school on 28 and 29 June 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 second 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 - 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 Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

James Kilner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

January 2011



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 4 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 second monitoring inspection from 28 and 29 June 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, observed ten part-lessons, scrutinised documents; met with the headteacher, consultant headteacher and senior members of staff; the Chair and Vice Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also looked at the Early Years Foundation Stage on this inspection in order to evaluate consistency of assessment procedures and rates of progress across the school.

#### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection the senior leadership team of the school is now permanent. Its members are the headteacher and recently appointed substantive deputy headteacher joined by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. The executive headteacher continues to play a key role in providing guidance and support for senior leaders. The IEB is now fully operational with a Chair and Vice-Chair appointed. The subject leader for mathematics is new to the post and the subject leader for English now has responsibility for the subject across the school.

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

Since the last monitoring inspection senior leaders have made a concerted effort to raise attainment and their efforts are now bearing fruit. Senior leaders, in consultation with the local authority and executive headteacher, have strengthened assessment procedures so that an accurate picture of improved attainment is now visible throughout the school. Improved outcomes in the end of Key Stage 2 as indicated in the unvalidated national tests this summer match closely the assessments made by class teachers. Outcomes for Year 6 pupils in mathematics show a slight increase on gains already made last year. In English, a whole-school focus on writing has been successful with almost two thirds of the Year 6 pupils attaining the expected level 4. This represents good improvement in writing when compared to previous years. Throughout the school, indications are that the majority of pupils are making at least expected rates of progress with a few, more able pupils, already showing signs of more accelerated progress.

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

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

## **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils enjoy the new curriculum which they say is 'really good fun, but you learn a lot at the same time'. Their behaviour is consistently good and they listen respectfully to the views and opinions of others during lessons. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils spontaneously applauded the efforts of their classmates who had written poems based on the emotions generated by colours.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

Improvements in outcomes are as result of improved quality of teaching, coupled with more accurate assessments of pupils' progress. The school has implemented a consistent format for lesson planning which ensures that the needs of the wide range of abilities and year groups in mixed-age classes are met. Teachers make reference to the learning objectives during the lessons and increasingly assess pupils' understanding during the plenary sessions. Marking guides pupils to the next levels in their learning and the majority of pupils are aware fully of where they are in their learning, what their targets are and what they need to do to improve further. Opportunities for some pupils to explore their learning independently are still at an early stage of development. The school also recognises that there is a need for a common policy as to how handwriting will be taught throughout the school. This is a priority which will be implemented from the start of the autumn term. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making better progress from generally low starting points so that the majority who will join the Year 1 class in September have already attained the expected Early Learning Goals.

The revised curriculum has reached the end of its trial period. Its impact has been assessed fully by senior leaders and the local authority. An in-depth analysis of the curriculum has been presented to the IEB for their approval prior to its implementation across the school from the start of the autumn term. Parents and carers have been canvassed for their views on the curriculum as have the pupils themselves. These views have been taken in to consideration when designing the curriculum. Evidence of the more creative curriculum is evident throughout the school, with displays of high quality art work produced by pupils who now take great pride in their work. Equally the design of the curriculum allows opportunities for pupils to employ a range of skills across different subjects. For example, in a successful mathematics lesson, pupils learning about ratios made effective use of their literacy skills to describe the consistency and taste of the cordial drinks they were mixing.

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

Members of the senior leadership team are increasingly autonomous in their decision-making and now take a strategic role in the running of the school. A carefully planned cycle of review and analysis of performance leads to action planning with success criteria based on outcomes for pupils. Half-termly progress meetings hold teachers to account for the achievements of pupils in their care. This information is also scrutinised by the coordinator for special educational needs who ensures that appropriate support is in place for pupils

identified as requiring additional help in their learning. Senior leaders conduct lesson observations which lead to support for weaker teaching where required. Increasingly, the school is able to offer its own successful role models of good teaching where support is required. The school is at an early stage of linking the outcomes of lesson monitoring with the half-termly pupil progress meetings.

Middle leaders, many new to their roles, have received effective support and guidance from both the local authority and from within the school's existing leadership team. They have a good overview of strengths and weaknesses within their subject and through close analysis of outcomes for pupils. A whole-school assessment of achievement in English is being linked to the analysis of end of key stage outcomes. Information gathered is to be used to identify remaining gaps in pupils' learning which need to be closed more rapidly.

The IEB is drawn from areas of individual expertise. Appropriately, the Chair of the IEB has ensured the retention of parent representation on the board so that they have a full grasp of parental issues and concerns. The IEB holds the school to good account but the Chair has not lost sight of the need to support as well as challenge the school in its journey through special measures. Remits for committees are now established with full terms of reference. Financial management procedures have been drawn up and have been successful in ensuring the budget is back on track and expenditure is monitored closely to ensure best value.

Strategic planning throughout the school is much more evaluative and identifies who among the school's leadership team is responsible for conducting monitoring and evaluation. This demonstrates not only the confidence the local authority has in the team but also the improved skill levels of senior leaders. Following the last monitoring inspection, parents and carers were informed fully of progress being made by the school. Parents and carers spoken to during monitoring inspection were pleased with progress the school is making and the up-to-date information they were receiving.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

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

## **External support**

The school continues to receive high quality support from the local authority. Regular meetings are held with senior officers to gauge rates of progress and the impact of interventions. The School Improvement Partner provides an accurate and incisive analysis of strengths and weaknesses within the school and is able to broker support if required. The local authority is committed fully to supporting the role of the executive headteacher who continues to provide expert guidance and support for senior leaders as they grow in confidence in their roles.