

Thursday 07 July 2011

Mr S McMullan  
Headteacher  
Whiteways Primary School  
Whiteways Road  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
S4 8EX

Dear Mr McMullan

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Whiteways Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 06 July 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection.

Please extend my thanks to the pupils, staff and to the Chair of the Governing Body who made time to meet me during the day.

As a result of the inspection on 7 and 8 December 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 satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the previous inspection the senior leadership of the school has changed. A new lead headteacher was recruited by the local authority from the second half of the spring term. A further assistant headteacher joined the senior leadership team with specific responsibilities for data management and pupil tracking systems. Under the guidance of the lead headteacher this effective and stable leadership team have only been in operation for a term and a half. The school continues the transition arrangements moving from a junior school to a through primary school with completion due by 2015. As a result of this, at the time of the monitoring inspection there was no Year 2 class in the school.

At the time of the previous inspection, attainment was below average and achievement was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has introduced a highly effective, accurate and rigorous system for recording and tracking attainment data and pupils' performance. This information is being used effectively in raising the levels of individual teacher's accountability for the progress made by pupils in their care. Early analysis of unvalidated outcomes for Year 6 pupils in national tests this summer indicate that the legacy of underachievement is being tackled successfully. A larger proportion of these pupils attained the expected Level 4 in both English and mathematics. More pupils throughout the school, particularly in the Year

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5 and 6 classes, are making at least expected rates of progress with indications of more accelerated progress in those classes where the quality of teaching is improving. However, this improved profile is not yet embedded, nor consistent throughout the school. Improvements are linked to better quality of teaching. Senior leaders insist on certain elements to be present in all lessons. There is an expectation that lesson planning will identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able. However, the school is aware that there is still work to be done to focus specifically on the learning needs of girls, particularly in mathematics.

The school has recently introduced a more creative curriculum based on extending pupils' knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of their life in the city of Sheffield. This ensures greater enjoyment of learning with planned opportunities for speaking and listening. This is also giving much greater scope for pupils to engage in extended writing tasks designed to improve their literacy skills.

The school is making significant inroads in to improving attendance through rewards, as well as employing rigorous systems to follow up first-day absence. Rates of attendance are still low but show improvements on last year's levels. A member of the senior leadership team and the learning mentor work effectively with community leaders, parents and carers to encourage better attendance. Of particular note is the successful work in targeting those families whose children are persistently absent.

Strong leadership from the recently appointed lead headteacher ensures an unrelenting drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise levels of attainment. With a dedicated and skilled senior leadership team, he ensures all understand that they are accountable for the outcomes for pupils in their care. Through robust procedures, including weekly work sampling and focussed lesson observations, underlying deep-seated weaknesses are being tackled successfully. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving, although the school recognises that there is still a need to improve this profile to a more consistently good or better level. For example, there are inconsistencies in marking of pupils' work and there is a lack of challenge presented to pupils, particularly in their use and application of mathematical concepts. Where weaker teaching remains, senior leaders have robust systems in place to support teachers through coaching and mentoring.

The local authority has provided good support, particularly in securing long-term leadership and management for the school. The local authority statement of action indicates appropriate support and regular monitoring linked to improving outcomes for pupils. The school is well placed to achieve the ambitious targets and deadlines set by the local authority for bringing about improvements.

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,

Mr James Kilner

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 07 Dec 2010**

- Raise attainment in English, and mathematics, so that at the end of Year 6, a greater proportion of pupils are securing at least the expected levels of attainment, by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, in particular for girls and the more-able pupils in mathematics
  - ensuring higher attainment in literacy and communications at Key Stages 1 and 2
  - providing more opportunities to draft, redraft and produce extended pieces of writing
  - continuing to support families to appreciate that regular attendance is important if pupils are to attain well.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching, at Key Stages 1 and 2, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - deliver exciting lessons to encourage the active engagement of all pupils in their learning
  - provide greater challenge for the most able pupils
  - build assessment into lessons so that teachers can better guide pupils on how to achieve challenging targets.