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11 November 2011

Mr A Jolley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jolley

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Chesswood Middle School**

Following my visit with Juliet Ward, additional inspector, to your school on 9 and 10 November 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 February 2011. 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

A Newly Qualified Teacher may 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 West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2011.**

- Increase the effectiveness of leaders, managers and the governing body in securing improvement by:
  - ensuring that the school improvement plan includes precise actions, timescales and measurable targets for improvement so that staff and the governing body are able to evaluate the impact of actions taken
  - giving middle leaders greater autonomy in steering and monitoring improvement and holding them to account for the impact of actions they take
  - providing additional support for the governing body to be effective in accelerating improvements in the school
  - ensuring all statutory policies and procedures are agreed, in place and rigorously monitored by July 2011
  - ensuring closer supervision of pupils in the playground.
  
- Rapidly accelerate progress and raise attainment more consistently for all pupils by:
  - increasing the proportion of teaching and learning that is good
  - increasing the pace and challenge in lessons
  - making more effective use of assessment information when planning lessons so that activities more accurately match the needs of pupils
  - using target setting more effectively to challenge pupils to achieve more.
  
- Ensure that the headteacher's vision and ambition for the school are shared by all leaders and managers involved in school improvement by:
  - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning so that teachers know how to improve
  - ensuring that assessment systems are fully developed, consistently applied and used well to evaluate pupils' progress
  - ensuring that all teachers take responsibility for assessing pupils' progress regularly throughout the year and making sure they are on track to meet challenging targets
  - reviewing the curriculum so that all pupils receive their full entitlement.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Chesswood Middle School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 November 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspectors observed the school's work including 16 lesson observations, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, pupils, members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring visit the school has appointed two deputy headteachers and two phase leaders who took up their posts at the start of the new academic year. Also, a new English subject leader started in the middle of September 2011.

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

Structures and processes to gather information on pupils' progress are now fully embedded. This is ensuring that information is collected regularly to inform leaders, managers and the governing body of how they are progressing in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Outcomes from this comprehensive data collection also provide teachers with accurate information about pupils' attainment and where any additional gaps lie. Monitoring outcomes show that increasing numbers of pupils are now making good and some accelerated progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Information on progress is used to inform lesson planning and intervention programmes effectively to support those pupils who need additional help. As a result, outcomes in 2011 for English and mathematics, by the end of Year 6, were better than the previous year.

Teachers are becoming more confident in their subject knowledge, planning takes account of pupils' entitlement, the differing learning needs of pupils and teachers adjust their plans accordingly. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, teaching ensured pupils were given time to work collaboratively on a problem-solving task and additional resources were available for those who needed them. Pupils in turn demonstrated good concentration and completed the task with obvious enjoyment and within the time allowed. As a result, most pupils made good progress in consolidating their understanding of area and perimeter.

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

- Increase the effectiveness of leaders, managers and the governing body in securing improvement – good.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are considerate, respectful and courteous to staff, and each other. This makes a positive contribution to the overall ethos and strong focus on learning that is evident throughout the school. Pupils who spoke with inspectors say they are enjoying school, and feel safe. They particularly enjoy opportunities to go on visits to places of interest and when practical activities help motivate and challenge their thinking. The school has consolidated improvements noted at the last monitoring visit to ensure its practice of providing a safe learning environment and close supervision for all pupils in the school. This is regularly monitored and updated.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching throughout the school continues to improve. Some very well taught lessons were observed. Where teaching is increasingly effective, planning is thorough and detailed, teachers' questioning effectively probes pupils' understanding and there are regular opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively on investigations or problem-solving activities. A range of resources used by staff, including laptops, video clips and practical apparatus, enhances curriculum provision and pupils' learning well. Teachers' expertise in using modern technologies, such as interactive whiteboards, is a particular strength of teaching. Strategies to consolidate the quality of teaching continue to be implemented through external support, coaching and mentoring. However, teaching and learning are not yet consistently good in all year groups through the school. Where teaching is less strong, opportunities are often missed in allowing pupils to take a more active part in lessons or, during class discussions, teaching fails to ensure all pupils are involved or they are sometimes overlooked.

The quality of marking has improved and pupils speak confidently about how this is helping them to improve their work, but this is not consistent throughout the school. Most pupils are provided with regular opportunities to reflect on and review their work in lessons. However, older pupils also said they would appreciate more help from teachers in setting personalised targets that would help them to understand exactly what they need to do next to improve. The work of teaching assistants in supporting teaching and learning is valued throughout the school. They receive regular training and development, according to need, as well as weekly sessions within school. Although teaching assistants work closely with teachers to provide

good quality support, opportunities to contribute to the monitoring of pupils' progress is less well embedded.

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

- Rapidly accelerate progress and raise attainment more consistently for all pupils – good.

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

The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteachers who have settled well to their new roles. Along with senior leaders, they are working effectively as a team to drive through the changes necessary to ensure maximum impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The headteacher maintains a clear vision for what needs to be done to secure sustainable improvements. His forensic analysis of data, coupled with very effective systems of communication between staff and governors, is ensuring rapid improvement throughout the school.

Feedback from a recent parents' and carers' survey provides unequivocal evidence of the confidence held by the vast majority in the work of the headteacher and key leaders. Similarly, teachers and other adults who work in the school say senior leaders now provide them with the support they need to achieve further improvement. They acknowledge and accept the high expectations placed on them but also appreciate that the training and development they receive are helping them to become more confident professionals.

Good communications with key leaders and strengthened systems to monitor the work of the school are ensuring members of the governing body continue to receive high-quality monitoring information from the school. As a result, governors are well informed and able to hold the school effectively to account. Recent governor appointments have further strengthened its capacity to hold the school effectively to account.

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

- Ensure that the headteacher's vision and ambition for the school are shared by all leaders and managers involved in school improvement – good.

### **External support**

Support from the local authority continues to be helpful, timely and succinct. In particular, middle leaders speak highly of the 'inspirational' support they have received in developing their leadership skills and subject knowledge.