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18 November 2011

Mrs Marie Curtis  
Headteacher  
Ash Grange Primary School  
Ash Church Road  
Ash  
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Hampshire  
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Dear Mrs Curtis

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Ash Grange Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 16 and 17 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 third 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 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 – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly Qualified Teachers may not 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 Interim Executive Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

James Henry

**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2010.**

- Ensure that leaders, managers and the governing body take steps urgently to accelerate the pace of improvement by:
  - evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour
  - monitoring all initiatives carefully so that effective practice becomes embedded and inconsistencies eliminated.
  
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that:
  - all entries in the school's single central record are complete and up to date by the end of December 2010
  - all other weaknesses pertaining to safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully addressed by the beginning of March 2011.
  
- By July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics by:
  - setting higher expectations in lessons for pupils' achievement and their rates of working
  - improving the guidance for pupils, particularly through marking, which better indicates the next steps in their learning and make more rigorous use of learning targets
  - clarify the roles of teaching assistants so that they support pupils' learning effectively and consistently well
  - paying more attention to pupils' handwriting and presentation.
  
- Develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys.
  
- Improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Ash Grange Primary School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 November 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, especially with regard to safeguarding and attendance, observed lessons and reviewed pupils' work. The inspector met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board of Governors and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, a permanent headteacher has been in post since 1 September 2011. Two new teachers have been appointed and teach classes in Key Stage 2. The headteacher has changed the organisation of staff throughout the school. This has included expanding the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders with some teachers responsible for different classes. A temporary teacher, with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, has been working with teaching assistants to further develop their skills in supporting pupils' learning. The school has appointed a new senior leader as a permanent replacement to be responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

While national assessment results in 2011 confirmed that attainment remained low, especially at the end of Key Stage 2, school assessments show that there is an improvement in attainment across the school. While a minority of pupils continue to underachieve, the majority work increasingly at levels expected for their age. This is because the rate at which pupils learn has continued to improve since the last monitoring inspection. Even where attainment is low, the majority of pupils make at least expected and sometimes better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessments show that a majority of pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve Level 4 or above in English but not in mathematics. This reflects the fluctuating attainment in English and mathematics across Key Stage 2. For example, pupils' attainment in mathematics in Year 3 and Year 5 is better than in English. Pupils in Year 4 have a weaker profile in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the school has clear intervention strategies to support pupils in this and other year groups. There is a clearer picture across Key Stage 1 with assessments showing pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics is better than reading. The school has begun initiatives, such as joint-reading sessions, to address this weakness. The large majority of pupils continue to enjoy their learning. For example, older pupils were making notes about Anne Frank's diary that linked to their history topic about the Second World

War. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were enjoying learning through play and role playing in different settings, such as a pretend hospital.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

The school has effectively developed further strategies to improve behaviour. This has been particularly successful in providing a whole-school approach where unacceptable behaviour is now constantly challenged by all staff both in classes and around the school. There is a good balance of rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. This is applied consistently by staff so pupils have clear guidance on how to conduct themselves. There have been no exclusions this term partly because systems are in place for staff to be pro-active in managing pupils' behaviour, especially boys. Regular reviews take place to identify situations where unacceptable behaviour may occur. For example, changes to the end of break time in avoiding queuing to enter school, the effective deployment of staff to supervise pupils during lunchtimes and staff working together to meet the social and emotional needs of pupils through 'time out' sessions have all had a positive effect on improving behaviour. The reduction in exclusions has had an impact on raising attendance and the whole-school approach to managing pupils' behaviour has increased the learning taking place in lessons. However, there are still instances where pupils find it difficult to exercise self-control and speak out of turn or interrupt others, especially when waiting to answer questions or respond in lessons.

Concerted efforts to reward pupils for good attendance and continuing successful legal sanctions against parents and carers whose children miss school without good reason mean that attendance has improved. Consequently, attendance is approaching the national average. The school monitors more rigorously those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and systematically records the difference actions have on improving their attendance. This shows that the number of pupils who are persistent absentees is being reduced. Initiatives through the local authority, such as 'Mac the Squirrel', that promote good attendance have been used to stress to the pupils the importance of their education.

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

- Develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys – good.
- Improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011 – good.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching continues to be securely satisfactory but there are now more elements of good practice. For example, there is a consistent focus by teachers on what pupils are expected to learn in lessons. Pupils are far more involved in discussing how they can measure if they have been successful in their learning. The assessment of pupils' progress has been sharpened and this used to more accurately inform teachers' planning. While activities in lessons are generally planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, there are occasions when pupils are expected to complete tasks before moving on to ones that provide sufficient challenge. A more consistent approach to managing behaviour has a positive impact on the pace of learning. As a result of professional training provided by the school, teaching assistants support pupils' learning more effectively rather than just managing pupils' behaviour.

The presentation of pupils' work has improved. While the handwriting of some pupils still needs further development, overall pupils take a greater pride in their work due to higher teacher expectations. However, the substance of pupils' work is still limited, especially in older pupils writing at length and for different purposes.

Following a review of the effectiveness of marking in helping pupils understand how to improve, an enhanced and more robust system has been introduced. This is clearly explained for pupils at the front of their books and evident in the marking of their work. It is too early to judge how effective this will be over time in helping pupils to improve. However, from discussions with pupils, they were initially finding the new system helpful in explaining how they could improve their learning. The sharpening of procedures to monitor pupils' progress has led to a more precise approach to providing targets for pupils that they can easily understand. Where targets are fully in place, they are closely linked to National Curriculum levels and used to inform teachers' planning for different ability groups. However, this is a new initiative and not fully embedded across the school.

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

- By July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics – satisfactory

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

The good leadership of the headteacher has, in a short space of time, effectively galvanised all staff to quickly bring about improvements and refreshed their ambition to succeed. One of the most immediate results is that senior leaders and middle leaders have been empowered and taken steps to monitor the work of the school. Following professional support from the headteacher, they have undertaken lesson observations, assessments of pupils' work and regularly review teachers' planning. This has not only improved the quality of teaching and increased the accountability

of staff for the achievement of pupils, but also given ownership and responsibility for school improvement to all levels of leadership. Therefore, initiatives, such as the new marking system and a whole-school approach to managing behaviour, are understood and agreed by all staff so providing stability and a clear direction for improvement. While some initiatives are becoming embedded, others, such as target setting, are not fully in place and consistently used. Self-evaluation by leaders and managers, including members of the interim executive board of governors, is accurate and has informed clear development plans that identify areas for further improvement, especially around raising pupils' achievement. The interim executive governing body has successfully continued to challenge the school for its performance as well as provide support. This has included unannounced visits to the school. It has been pro-active in identifying parents and carers who are committed to the success of the school, and put plans in place to mentor them in the roles and responsibilities of being a member of a governing body.

The school has built effectively on the improvements to the safeguarding procedures already in place at the last inspection. There is now a vulnerable child register that identifies pupils who may be at risk of harm and this is monitored and shared with staff and outside agencies as appropriate. Individual educational plans are monitored more closely by the teacher responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and used more effectively by class teachers to support pupils with emotional, social or behavioural difficulties. The headteacher has undertaken appropriate child-protection training, which means that the school now has two child protection officers. Safeguarding training for all staff was updated in September 2011. During the inspection, pupils were actively engaged in 'Anti-bullying Week' to help them feel safe in school.

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

- Ensure that leaders, managers and the governing body take steps urgently to accelerate the pace of improvement -- good
  
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements – good

### **External support**

The school has continued to benefit from the effective support provided by the local authority, through the use of English and mathematics consultants and the challenge provided by the local authority adviser. Support is effective because the headteacher and senior leaders are involved in adapting any initiatives to closely match to the needs of the school. The local authority has provided good support to help the school improve attendance and arranged for funding to manage personnel changes in the employing of new staff.