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25 November 2011

Mrs A Nettleship  
Headteacher  
Weston Mill Community Primary School  
Ferndale Road  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL2 2EL

Dear Mrs Nettleship

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Weston Mill Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 and 24 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 September 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed where suitable professional development can be assured and where I support the appointment.

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 Plymouth.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- In order to raise attainment and accelerate progress, improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that assessment information is used consistently to plan lessons at the appropriate level for pupils' ages and abilities.
  
- Develop the effectiveness of leadership by:
  - ensuring all staff with leadership roles have the skills to carry them out and fully understand their accountabilities
  - ensuring assessment information is accurate and used more rigorously to track the progress of all groups of pupils from their starting points, and to set challenging targets
  - rigorously monitoring and driving improvement in the quality of teaching.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Weston Mill Community Primary School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 23–24 November 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other staff, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a group of pupils from Years 2 to 5, and spoke on the telephone to a senior adviser from the local authority.

#### **Context**

A new deputy headteacher and play leader took up their appointments in September. The team leader for Years 1 and 2 is on maternity leave and another teacher is temporarily carrying out this role. A Years 3 and 4 teacher is currently on long-term sick leave and a teacher who normally covers teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is carrying out her duties. The school's planned admission number rose to 60 from September and there are now more children in the two Reception classes. Accommodation was remodelled during the summer to improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Other improvements include a new media centre and staffroom as well as reorganising available space to create additional classrooms.

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

Pupils' progress in English and mathematics continues to show good improvement as a result of better teaching. Results in the Year 6 national tests in 2011 were a significant improvement on 2010. Boys' attainment was much closer to that of the girls in English, although the gap widened in mathematics and no boys achieved the higher Level 5. The progress Year 6 pupils had made since the end of Year 2 was also much improved. In mathematics, the progress made by boys and girls was very similar and boys made better progress in English than girls. Attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics rose significantly in 2011, although it remains below average overall.

Progress has continued to improve in the rest of the school, particularly in writing. Pupils made slower progress in reading in Year 1 and in mathematics in Year 4 in 2010/11 and the school has been quick to put in place additional support and challenge from September to address possible underachievement.

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

- raise attainment and accelerate progress – good.

## **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Behaviour observed in classrooms and around the school continues to be good. Pupils interviewed were confident that they knew what they had to do to improve their work. They were pleased with the school council as a forum for pupils' ideas and suggestions, for example the creation of a new gardening area. Pupils also reported that activities at break and lunchtime were now more fun.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of provision continues to be central to the school's improvement. Detailed lesson observations identify areas for improvement where appropriate and these are followed up. As a result, teaching is continuing to improve and the school's data show a growing proportion of stronger teaching. Some good teaching was observed during this inspection, characterised by engaging activities and good provision for the varying needs of pupils within the class. All staff have been trained in a scheme that systematically develops pupils' knowledge of phonics to support improvement in reading and in writing. This scheme was introduced only seven weeks ago but early indications are that staff confidence is growing rapidly and most pupils are moving swiftly through it. Some have benefited already from successful completion. Additional support for the teaching of numeracy has been carefully targeted and involves detailed advice from the coordinator who has taught alongside some colleagues to develop their knowledge and skills. Focused support for individuals from the advanced skills teacher continues.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning – good.

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

The senior leadership team continues to work effectively to bring about improvement, under the committed leadership of the headteacher and strengthened by the new deputy headteacher who leads and manages the new phonics programme. The middle leadership team is increasingly effective, with staff now confidently taking the lead in monitoring and evaluating the success of the school's improvement activities. The literacy and numeracy coordinators are contributing directly to identifying and addressing priorities for improvement each term. Middle leaders compile 'school evaluation briefings' that provide useful summaries of key data and activities undertaken, although they sometimes find it more difficult to draw sharply-focused conclusions. The use of assessment data has improved further and class teachers are now starting to analyse the data from their class to reflect on the progress of different groups as well as continuing to consider the progress of individuals who might be at risk of underachievement.

The development of the governing body has been maintained and it is clear that governors are now more confident in asking questions of the school's leaders about pupils' progress, for example in mathematics. Both the literacy and numeracy coordinators have recently reported to the curriculum and buildings committee. Governors visit the school, report back to the governing body and are rightly looking to focus their visits more sharply on improvement priorities.

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

- develop the effectiveness of leadership – good.

### **External support**

The local authority's support is good and has been adjusted well to the progress the school is making. A recent focus has been on assessing the strength in depth of the leadership of the school. The local authority has rightly concluded that the school does not need extensive support to maintain the pace of improvement.