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Sally Morrison  
Headteacher  
Eyres Monsell Primary School  
Simmins Crescent  
Leicester  
LE2 9AH

Dear Ms Morrison

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Eyres Monsell Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 6 and 7 December 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 – 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress to raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - raising the overall quality of teaching to at least good
  - ensuring that work is more closely planned to match pupils' needs and interests, particularly for boys
  - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
  
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
  - reviewing and revising current procedures taking into account the views of pupils, parents and carers and staff
  - re-establishing an agreed code of conduct of behaviour, rewards and sanctions
  - ensuring that all staff consistently apply the agreed strategies.
  
- Strengthen the school's self-evaluation by:
  - focusing on pupils' progress in all monitoring and evaluation activities making judgements on progress explicit
  - fine-tuning the monitoring and evaluation skills of middle leaders.
  
- Improve attendance by:
  - working more closely with parents and carers whose children attend less regularly
  - making parents and carers more aware of their responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Eyres Monsell Primary School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 December 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, four members of the governing body, pupils and the school improvement adviser.

#### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection two teachers have joined the school and a new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have been appointed. The deputy headteacher has been absent from school since September.

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

Results of teacher assessments completed in the summer term on pupils in Year 2 showed that, despite a slight improvement, attainment is low in comparison with national figures. Results in writing were especially low, particularly for boys. Results from national tests taken by pupils in Year 6 show that their attainment was well below average despite a high proportion of pupils making the expected two levels of progress during Key Stage 2. The school analyses closely the performance of groups of pupils. These analyses indicate that overall, groups achieve similarly.

School data show that although current attainment remains low, more pupils throughout the school are working at the levels expected than at the time of the previous monitoring inspection. This more positive picture matches evidence from lesson observations and work scrutiny that pupils are making better progress. At the time of the previous monitoring inspection, pupils' progress in lessons was never better than satisfactory. Now in five of the 10 lessons observed progress was good. There is evidence in pupils' books of improving basic skills such as spelling and sentence construction English, and place value and subtraction in mathematics. The school recognises the need to accelerate this progress in order to narrow the gap between what pupils in the school attain and pupils' attainment nationally.

Data show that achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is stronger than in the other key stages. For example, although children join the school with skills well below those expected their attainment is close to the national averages by the time they start Year 1. Despite this, the great majority require additional support in their reading following assessment in Year 1.

Evidence from lesson observations across the school indicates that pupils' attitudes to and enjoyment of learning are improving. Teachers tailor their medium-term plans to ensure that topics and activities are motivating for boys. Recorded work in topic

and science books provides plenty of examples of pupils applying their literacy skills. However, it is less clear that purposeful cross-curricular links are promoting opportunities to practise numeracy skills.

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

- accelerate the rate of pupils' progress to raise attainment in English and mathematics – good.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now at 96.1%. This gain is the result of improved communications with parents and carers reminding them of their responsibilities, particularly with regard to avoiding taking family holidays during term time. The school has case studies that demonstrate how the work of the attendance officer has secured average attendance rates for pupils who were persistently absent from school, and how the learning mentor has acted to improve the punctuality of latecomers.

Following consultations with staff, pupils and parents and carers, the school is implementing a new behaviour policy. Staff, including midday supervisors, have received training on positive behaviour management and de-escalation techniques. They are now recording critical incidents appropriately, allowing the behaviour team to monitor the nature and frequency of serious breaches of the code of conduct. These actions are having a positive impact. Behaviour in the majority of classes is good and ill discipline only very occasionally disturbs learning. Compared to the same period last year, the number of exclusions has fallen from 12 to four. However, the lack of self-control shown by boys at playtimes means that the number of pupils missing their playtimes is not reducing as swiftly.

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

- improve pupils' attendance – good
- improve pupils' behaviour – satisfactory.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous monitoring inspection. Most lessons have clear learning objectives that take into account assessment information. Brisk explanations of these objectives ensure that pupils and adults supporting them are clear about what pupils are expected to learn. This was the case in an effective lesson teaching pupils the phoneme 'ou'. There was a good focus on listening to the individual sounds in a given word, clear articulation by the teacher, effective multi-sensory reinforcement as pupils tapped out on their fingers the number of sounds they heard in a word, and there were plenty of opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge by writing phonemes, words and sentences. Most staff have improved their skills in targeting questions to challenge pupils' understanding. Adults were observed prompting pupils to explain and justify their

answers individually, in small groups and in whole-class dialogue. In the best examples, teachers challenged pupils to provide extended answers and gave them time for discussion. Staff also now more consistently employ a range of strategies to assess progress in lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson investigating nets, the teacher skilfully drew learning together at key moments of the lesson by encouraging pupils to describe both their achievements and the difficulties they were encountering. The approach encouraged pupils to give feedback, share their ideas and develop the vital attribute of perseverance when trying to solve problems.

Where learning was no better than satisfactory the factors that acted as barriers to better progress included:

- teachers spending too long introducing activities and so giving pupils little time to apply and practise their skills
- low expectations of what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities could achieve independently
- adults missing opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) when they are writing
- the overuse of whiteboards and 'Post-it' notes when pupils are recording their ideas - these resources can hinder the development of good handwriting, lower expectations with regard to the accuracy of spelling and punctuation, and restrict opportunities for adults to evaluate carefully individual performance at the end of a lesson.

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

The school's procedures for self-evaluation have improved since the previous monitoring visit. There has been a restructuring of staff roles and responsibilities, and accompanying job descriptions ensure that post-holders are clear that the core purpose of their responsibility is to secure higher attainment. Stronger performance management procedures focus on pupils' progress and are informed by lesson observations, work scrutiny and regular reviews of data. These are beginning to ensure that the school understands accurately its emerging strengths and continuing areas for development. Following coaching from the headteacher and local authority officers, subject leaders are now ready to add lesson observations to the range of activities they undertake to drive improvement. They already have a stronger understanding of what the range of data collected tells about the school's performance, and the relative strengths and weaknesses in the practice of their colleagues.

The school's monitoring file demonstrates that leaders are prepared to identify and challenge inadequate practice. Where necessary they take decisive action to tackle underperformance. Previously, reports on satisfactory or inadequate teaching lacked detail and targets for improvement. This weakness has been tackled, so that monitoring activities are helping to secure better provision. Nevertheless, the proportion of good and outstanding teaching remains too small.

A new special educational needs coordinator took up her post in September. The initial allocation of two days per week to fulfil the role has been increased in response to evidence that the management of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities required improvement. For example, it was unclear exactly whether individuals were in the 'school action' or 'school action plus' category. The coordinator also identified that staff working with pupils with were not always clear about the factors that act as barriers to them learning successfully or behaving appropriately. One initiative to improve this serious weakness is the establishment of weekly meetings between teachers and support staff that focus on provision for pupils with additional needs. The coordinator has not yet had sufficient time to quality assure or enhance the work of adults supporting pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. She is aware that the very high proportion of pupils in the school identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities may indicate that pupils who simply require better teaching are being identified as requiring additional support because of low attainment.

The new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have plenty of experience in securing school improvement through holding leaders to account for performance. They are able to ask challenging questions following analyses of data or consideration of reports from the headteacher and subject leaders. Governors are beginning to make focused visits to classrooms and formally record their findings. The governing body has yet to conduct a thorough review of the cost effectiveness of the range of strategies the school funds in its efforts to secure improvement.

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

- strengthen the school's procedures for self-evaluation – good.

### **External support**

The local authority and other external consultants have provided effective support that has helped secure improvements in all of the areas identified in the inspection of February 2011. Their expertise has led to improvements in the teaching of mathematics and English, and the effectiveness of the school's leaders and managers. The behaviour support team and the education welfare officer have assisted the school well and helped bring about better behaviour and higher attendance. Monitoring of the school's performance by the local authority and the school improvement adviser is rigorous and accurate. Their reports give the governing body and the school's leaders helpful pointers for improvement.