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26 January 2012

Mrs Briggs  
Headteacher  
Cobblers Lane Primary School  
Cobblers Lane  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire  
WF8 2HN

Dear Mrs Briggs

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Cobblers Lane Primary School**

Following my visit with Keith Bardon, additional inspector, to your school on 24 and 25 January 2012, 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 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 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 Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

January 2012



## **Annex**

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

- As a matter of urgency, ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their progress and achievement in all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 by:
  - improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better throughout the school
  - ensuring that pupils are fully aware of what they have to learn, are sufficiently challenged in their work and know what they need to do to improve it further
  - improving pupils' enjoyment of lessons and their skills of independent learning.
- Improve behaviour so that all pupils and staff are safe in school by enabling teachers consistently to manage pupils' behaviour successfully.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - ensuring that all staff work together to achieve a shared vision for the school's success
  - implementing and monitoring the progress of a coherent development plan that is focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and the outcomes for pupils
  - ensuring that the governing body holds the leadership team fully to account for its work and meets all its statutory responsibilities.
- Improve attendance by reversing the current decline, and ensuring that all pupils attend regularly.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Cobblers Lane Primary School**

### **Report from the fifth monitoring inspection from 24 January to 25 January 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, staff, a group of pupils, the School Improvement Adviser and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB).

#### **Context**

The substantive headteacher at the time of the previous section 5 inspection has left the school. Since September 2010, the school has been led by three temporary headteachers. A permanent headteacher took up her position at the beginning of the autumn term 2011.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Attainment is low. The unvalidated results of pupils in the end of Year 6 national tests in 2011 showed that the school was not reaching the government's national floor standards. However, there are now clear signs that the decline evident over the past three years is being reversed. The proportion of pupils attaining age-related expectations at the end of Year 6 is now higher than when the school was judged to require special measures. Most significantly, pupils are currently making better progress in English and mathematics than they have for some time and especially since the previous inspection. An analysis of data held by the school indicates that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve higher than the previous cohort. The senior leadership team is confident that government floor standards in English and mathematics will be reached in 2012. The lesson observations and a scrutiny of work undertaken during the monitoring inspection suggest that overall, pupils are making better progress and the attainment gap with standards achieved nationally is beginning to close. However, there remains much to be done if the expectations of senior leaders are to be realised in 2012 and beyond. Outcomes will be dependent on consistently good teaching and the impact of planned targeted intervention programmes designed to eradicate gaps in knowledge and understanding for some pupils.

#### **The quality of teaching**

Although the quality of teaching remains inconsistent, particularly within Key Stage 2, it has improved significantly since the previous section 5 inspection. This is why pupils are making better progress and why the gaps in attainment are beginning to narrow. The extent to which pupils are engaged in their learning through discussion and response to teachers' well-crafted questions is effectively developing their skills and enhancing understanding. This is evident in most lessons and is a feature of classroom practice that has developed strongly since the previous monitoring inspection. Other aspects associated with the

improvement in teaching that are more evident than at the time of the previous section 5 inspection include: effective behaviour management, better quality relationships between adults and increasingly higher expectations in relation to what pupils are capable of achieving. The quality of marking is less variable with a lot that is good. Pupils are given clear direction as to how they may improve as well as praise for their efforts. Teachers throughout the school are becoming more aware of pupils' gaps in skills and knowledge, partially through improved assessment as well as the result of curriculum audits undertaken by English and mathematics subject leaders. There remains much work to be done to ensure that these weaknesses are effectively catered for through an accurate match of work to pupils' learning needs and the effective deployment of support staff within the classroom, whether teachers or teaching assistants. Pupils spoken to during the monitoring inspection said that they enjoy school because lessons are more interesting. Many pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, commented how much they enjoy the use of 'learning logs' which enable them to practise a range of skills and acquire knowledge through homework. This is effectively enabling pupils to develop skills of independent learning as well as promoting positive attitudes towards learning.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their progress and achievement in all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 by improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better throughout the school - good

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The behaviour of pupils has improved significantly since the previous section 5 inspection as have their attitudes to learning during lessons. This has been brought about by the introduction of a behaviour policy that is rigorously and consistently implemented by all staff. This is making an important contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are acutely aware that behaviour has improved and say they now feel safe. Pupils move around the school in an orderly and sensible fashion. They take an active part during lessons and generally listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils now work collaboratively and demonstrate respect for others within and beyond the school. During the monitoring inspection, pupils were courteous and polite. The school has worked hard to raise attendance by working with parents and carers and by making pupils aware of the benefits of school. A system of rewards for good attendance has worked well and, as a result, attendance has risen. It is currently in line with the national average. The single central record meets requirements.

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

- Improve behaviour, so that all pupils and staff are safe in school by enabling teachers consistently to manage pupils' behaviour successfully - good.
- Improve attendance by reversing the current decline, and ensuring that all pupils attend regularly – good.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The appointment of the current headteacher has brought much needed stability to the school. The determination of school leaders to monitor the work of the school more closely and hold teachers to account for their performance is influencing improvements in teaching. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the needs of the school and this has been strengthened by a continuous programme of self-evaluation that informs the school improvement plan which in turn is monitored effectively. The working relationship between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher has been consolidated since the previous monitoring inspection and they are proving to be an effective team. Staff work well together and are working hard to secure improvement. Changes to the leadership structure, together with higher expectations of those with management responsibilities, are helping to take the school forward. The influence and impact of subject leaders on provision and pupils' progress throughout the school have developed well over recent months. There is now a greater focus on pupil outcomes. Senior leaders have successfully carried out an audit of pupils' needs and now have a clearer understanding of what needs to be done to address gaps in skills and understanding for some pupils. They are aware that the next step is to ensure without delay that appropriate teaching strategies are effectively employed to eradicate these weaknesses. A significant development since the previous monitoring inspection has been a review of science provision. A science policy and a programme of study are now in place, staff have received training and science is now taught regularly throughout the school.

The IEB continues to monitor the work of the school well and provides a good balance of support and challenge.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels - good
- As a matter of urgency, ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met - good

## **External support**

The local authority, through the School Improvement Adviser, has provided good support to the school. The work undertaken with subject leaders in helping them to fulfil their role has proved to be particularly productive.