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Ms J Baker  
Doxey Primary and Nursery School  
Doxey Road  
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Stafford  
ST16 1EG

Dear Ms Baker

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Doxey Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 24–25 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 3 March 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 – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed only with the prior agreement of HMI and limited to one teacher in Year 5, subject to robust mentoring procedures established with a partner school.

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 Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Increase rates of pupils' learning and progress so that attainment in English and mathematics are at least in line with national averages at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, by:
  - developing pupils' skills as independent learners
  - focusing closely on the development of pupils' skills as writers from an early age and ensuring that pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have regular opportunities to write at length in all subjects
  - reviewing arrangements for the grouping of pupils in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and ensuring effective systems for monitoring coverage of the curriculum.
  
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that, by March 2012, the majority of lessons are good or better, by:
  - ensuring that teachers set clear, challenging targets for pupils of different levels of ability to achieve, based on the skills to be developed
  - providing more challenging, open-ended activities in place of limited photocopied worksheets, to promote pupils' thinking skills
  - ensuring that teachers' marking of pupils' work provides clear targets to be achieved, and that teachers check on pupils' response to their marking.
  
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement by:
  - sharpening the skills of leaders and managers in self-evaluation
  - providing greater rigour in the way leaders and managers monitor the school's performance, so that actions taken will bring about sustainable improvements in the quality of provision.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Doxey Primary and Nursery School second monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 January 2012**

### **Evidence**

HMI observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, members of staff, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and representatives from the local authority. A number of joint lesson observations were completed with the acting headteacher.

### **Context**

Since the monitoring visit in September 2011, the headteacher has resigned. The local authority has appointed the deputy headteacher to fulfil the role of full-time acting headteacher until a new substantive headteacher is recruited. One teacher has left the school and one newly qualified teacher has been appointed on a temporary basis, with the approval of HMI.

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

Attainment remains too low in too many year groups and there is still much to do to tackle the underachievement that exists in the school. Evidence from lesson observations show, despite intensive support from local authority Early Years Foundation Stage consultants, that children in the Nursery and Reception classes are not making fast enough progress. This is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development.

The results of national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2011 in mathematics and writing remain significantly below the national average and represent inadequate progress. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2011 indicate that attainment remains well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, with pupils being almost a year below national expectations. Girls are doing less well than boys. Progress in the lessons observed during the monitoring inspection was variable and was almost always directly related to the quality of the input from the teachers and the teaching assistants.

Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' achievement is not improving fast enough and too many pupils are not on course to meet their targets in English. Although writing is now taught regularly, the teaching is not ensuring that previous underachievement and gaps in pupils' knowledge are being compensated for fully. Furthermore, satisfactory teaching is not good enough to enable pupils to make the more rapid progress required to fill the gaps in their learning and raise attainment to be in line with the national averages by the time they leave school.

The previous inspection report asked the school to improve the quality of the mathematics curriculum to better meet the needs of all pupils by ensuring individual topics identify a clear structure of skills and knowledge. The school is at an early stage of responding to this area for improvement and it is too early to measure the impact on pupils' progress of actions taken.

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

- increase rates of pupils' learning and progress so that attainment in English and mathematics are at least in line with national averages at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 – inadequate.

### **The quality of teaching**

The visit confirmed the school's view that an increasing proportion of teaching is satisfactory. None of the teaching seen during the monitoring inspection was of good quality. This is significantly lower than the school's analysis. Although teaching has improved, there remains a significant proportion of inadequate teaching.

Teachers' planning has improved, as have their assessment of progress and how pupils are helped to understand what has been achieved and what is needed next. These improvements, however, are from a low base. All lessons seen during the monitoring visit had a clear structure and relevant objectives for learning. In general, relationships between teachers and pupils were friendly and respectful. The teachers in Key Stage 2 have gained in confidence and they are using a broader range of strategies, such as paired talk and peer assessment, to enliven the learning. The quality of teachers' marking is much improved, particularly in English. In the best examples, teachers offer clear advice about how well the pupil has done in relation to the learning intention.

Nonetheless, the current overall picture is one of marked inconsistency in the quality of classroom practice between classes and year groups. In several lessons observed, planned short starter activities extended over half the lesson. Key elements were missed out. Pupils had to wait for long periods for the teacher to notice they were either not learning or had quickly finished the work set. Expectations about the pupils' capabilities in some classes remain too low, particularly in Key Stage 1. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning activities observed were not suitable for children to make the progress of which they are capable. Many activities were too easy. Here, teachers' planning focused too much on the activities that the children were carrying out, rather than the skills children needed to develop in order to make progress.

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

- raise the quality of teaching and learning so that by March 2012, the majority of lessons are good or better – inadequate.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour has improved in lessons and around school. Pupils generally behave well. Where behaviour is less than satisfactory, it is directly linked to a lack of stimulus and challenge in lessons. Attendance is currently above the national average. Accidental activation of the fire alarm during the monitoring visit revealed that fire safety procedures were not robust enough and were not effectively implemented. The school plans to review all of its health and safety procedures in light of this. The school's procedures for recruitment and child protection are robust.

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

The newly appointed acting headteacher has been quick to respond to the issues identified in the last monitoring letter. Signs of improvement stemming from her own evaluation are also apparent. She is clear that much more needs to be done to capitalise on the improved climate for learning to ensure that pupils achieve their potential. The monitoring of teaching has been comprehensive and systematic. However, the written evaluations of teaching do not sufficiently focus on the impact that the teachers are having on the learning and progress of all pupils in the class. Teachers whose work is in need of improvement have been identified and suitable programmes of support set up. Teachers new to the school report that they are well supported. Teaching assistants and support staff now play a major role in pupils' learning, especially in the teaching of early reading and phonics. They report that they feel more valued and part of the whole-school team.

Inadequate teaching has not been eliminated quickly enough because middle leadership is weak, particularly those leaders who are in receipt of teaching and learning responsibility points. These middle leaders do not follow or implement agreed policy and therefore the momentum for improvement seen elsewhere is lost. Importantly, the investment in high quality training and work done to improve teaching, particularly in the teaching for the very youngest children and improving provision in mathematics, is squandered. The acting headteacher has therefore, prioritised these roles as those that require immediate robust action. The newly appointed leaders for phonics, English and special educational needs, however, are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are beginning to contribute to school improvement. They are aware of the significance of the role they need to play in raising attainment.

Members of the governing body continue to offer their unstinting support to the school and their capacity to hold the school to account is improving. They are developing their roles as critical friends through regular visits and their effective committee structure. The Chair of the Governing Body has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is very keen to maintain the improvements instigated by the acting headteacher.

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

- improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement
  - satisfactory.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided appropriate support through its advisers, consultants and local partner schools. It acted swiftly to secure continuity of leadership for the school after the resignation of the headteacher. Monitoring of the school's performance by the local authority is rigorous and accurate. Regular reports from the advisers provide the governing body and the school's leaders with helpful pointers for improvement.