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5 March 2012

Mrs Surinder Dhingra  
Headteacher  
Crowlands Primary School  
London Road  
Romford  
RM7 9EJ

Dear Mrs Dhingra

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Crowlands Primary School**

Following my visit with Olson Davis, Additional Inspector, to your school on 1 and 2 March 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 – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.

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 Havering.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Take action immediately to provide training for all staff in child protection and enhanced training for the designated person(s) that meet statutory requirements.
- Carry out comprehensive risk assessments of hazards on the school site and for all activities.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance, by:
  - ensuring whole-school policies and procedures are comprehensive, reviewed appropriately and implemented effectively
  - sharing responsibilities for leadership and management more widely so that all managers can have greater impact on school improvement
  - improving the effectiveness with which systems for tracking pupils' progress are managed and the information shared with teachers
  - monitoring teachers' planning more effectively so that essential components are consistently included.
- Raise pupils' attainment through improved teaching, so that 75% or more is consistently at least good and attainment is broadly average in all subjects by September 2011, by:
  - making full use of assessment information to ensure higher expectations in lessons and increased challenge for all pupils
  - ensuring that activities match the abilities of the pupils
  - improving teachers' marking and the use of targets to ensure that all pupils are aware of how they can improve.
- Reduce persistent absence so that it is no higher than the national average by April 2011.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Crowlands Primary School**

### **Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on 1 and 2 March 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work over two days, scrutinised documents and met the headteacher, a range of senior and middle managers, groups of staff, a small group of parents and carers, pupils, representatives from the governing body and the local authority. Pupils were observed at lunchtime and generally around the school.

#### **Context**

There have been further staff changes at the school. Two teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage have resigned and been replaced by two long-term supply teachers. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has resigned her responsibilities and the headteacher currently oversees the phase. Seven staff will leave at the end of this term.

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

Current school assessment notes attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 continues to be low in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, attainment is in line with the national average in English and low in mathematics. Pupils' attainment and progress in Year 3 is a cause for concern. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' progress and ultimately their achievement continues to vary in lessons between inadequate and good because of the variability in the quality of teaching.

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

The quality of teaching remains similar to that identified at the previous monitoring inspection and is a key factor in some pupils' slower progress. School monitoring records indicate that there is still inadequate teaching in the school with specific concerns in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. There have been some improvements to assessment. In some classes, pupils are encouraged to review each other's work as well as to evaluate their own, but this does not happen regularly enough for them to develop the skills needed to make it productive. Marking is slowly improving. Teachers now mark pupils' work regularly and some teachers provide diagnostic feedback. Pupils appreciate the written dialogue on how to improve. Inspectors observed some effective teaching. During these lessons, teachers accurately assess pupils' attainment and use this to plan exciting lessons which meet pupils' varied needs. Despite these improvements, in some lessons, pupils of differing abilities are set the same work and given the same amount of time in which to complete it. Consequently, the more able are not always sufficiently challenged, while pupils who find learning difficult struggle with their work. Additionally, teachers do not always check pupils' prior learning at the start of the

lesson, neither do they pick up on misconceptions or where key words are not understood. Consequently, at the end of the lessons, teachers have too little clear evidence about how successful learning has been.

Teachers have worked diligently to improve their questioning skills and ask open questions. However, the use of questions to check pupils' understanding and promote extended answers is not well developed and pupils lack confidence in offering more than one- or two-word answers. Additional adults sometimes contribute well to learning, but only when they are well briefed by the teacher as to how to support pupils. However, sometimes this is not the case.

Progress since the last inspection:

- raise pupils' attainment through improved teaching, so that 75% or more is consistently at least good and attainment is broadly average in all subjects by September 2011 – inadequate.

### **Behaviour and safety**

Pupils' behaviour continues to be good throughout the school. Pupils display good attitudes when following instructions, for example lining up outside before entering the classroom or going into and leaving assembly. In lessons, pupils are supportive of each other and work together in small groups and pairs. School staff and the local authority have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance. Pupils and their parents and carers have been made more aware of the importance of coming to school regularly. The result is that the overall attendance figure is increasing. For example, it has increased from 95.1% in May 2011 to 95.6% in December 2011, which is in line with the national average for primary schools. In addition, the number of persistent absentees has been reduced. The school is aware that it is necessary to remain vigilant and continue to discourage strongly the occasional absences that persist and interrupt pupils' learning. A few parents and carers report that their children, who were previously eager and confident in coming to school, are at times upset or nervous. They attribute this to the many changes that have taken place, in particular to the curriculum.

Progress since the last inspection:

- reduce persistent absence so that it is no higher than the national average by April 2011 – good.

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

Staff morale is low. The headteacher does not have the full support of staff at all levels. As a consequence, the staff are not well led and do not work as an effective team. The arrangements for the school's leadership since the third monitoring visit have not been effective in enabling the school to move forward as quickly as it should. High levels of staff absence and low staff morale are compounded by inaccurate self-evaluation. The headteacher believes the school to be much better than it is. The school's self-evaluation is not an effective tool for improvement.

Current development planning lacks sufficient detail to highlight the most important areas for improvement and how these link to pupils' learning. Efforts to improve teaching have met with limited success. Monitoring of the school's work lacks rigour and does not consider its impact on pupils' learning. For example, the majority of lesson observations do not focus carefully on both teaching and learning and do not always comment sufficiently on the progress of pupils of differing prior attainment.

Expectations of pupils, the variety of learning and the use of assessment to check understanding all vary too much between classes. There is not enough good or better teaching and too much which is satisfactory or inadequate to ensure pupils make the consistently rapid progress needed in some year groups. Progress since the last monitoring inspection has not been sufficient to eradicate significant and continuing weaknesses. Actions have been taken at whole-school level, but the headteacher and the senior team have not addressed all the weaknesses in teaching and ensured high-quality practice in all classes. The local authority undertook a review of the school's progress in February 2012, and the resultant report findings are, overall, in line with the findings of this monitoring inspection.

Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors during this visit are concerned that the school leaders are not doing enough to act on their concerns and to inform them about any actions taken. Parents and carers are particularly worried about the changes to the curriculum and high staff absence which disrupts their children's learning. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body had identified problems around strategic leadership and the lack of clear direction driving improvement in the school. For example, they became aware of low staff morale and high levels of staff absence and requested help from the local authority before this monitoring visit, thereby establishing themselves as both responsible and challenging.

Progress since the last inspection:

- take action immediately to provide training for all staff in child protection and enhanced training for the designated person(s) that meets statutory requirements – satisfactory
- carry out comprehensive risk assessments of hazards on the school site and for all activities – satisfactory
- improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance – inadequate.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to provide a high level of support and guidance for school staff. The link adviser works closely with the school to adjust and amend the support needed. In order to accelerate the impact of their support, the local authority is aware that it needs to act urgently to address the concerns expressed by staff and develop the school's capacity to improve.