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2 March 2012

Mr A Jolley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jolley

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Chesswood Middle School**

Following my visit (with Cynthia Millband, additional inspector) to your school on 28 and 29 February 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 third 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – Satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed in Years 5, 6 and 7

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 West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Increase the effectiveness of leaders, managers and the governing body in securing improvement by:
  - ensuring that the school improvement plan includes precise actions, timescales and measurable targets for improvement so that staff and the governing body are able to evaluate the impact of actions taken
  - giving middle leaders greater autonomy in steering and monitoring improvement and holding them to account for the impact of actions they take
  - providing additional support for the governing body to be effective in accelerating improvements in the school
  - ensuring all statutory policies and procedures are agreed, in place and rigorously monitored by July 2011
  - ensuring closer supervision of pupils in the playground.
  
- Rapidly accelerate progress and raise attainment more consistently for all pupils by:
  - increasing the proportion of teaching and learning that is good
  - increasing the pace and challenge in lessons
  - making more effective use of assessment information when planning lessons so that activities more accurately match the needs of pupils
  - using target setting more effectively to challenge pupils to achieve more.
  
- Ensure that the headteacher's vision and ambition for the school are shared by all leaders and managers involved in school improvement by:
  - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning so that teachers know how to improve
  - ensuring that assessment systems are fully developed, consistently applied and used well to evaluate pupils' progress
  - ensuring that all teachers take responsibility for assessing pupils' progress regularly throughout the year and making sure they are on track to meet challenging targets
  - reviewing the curriculum so that all pupils receive their full entitlement.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Chesswood Middle School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 28–29 February 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders and teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, representatives from the governing body and a local authority representative.

#### **Context**

Four new members of the governing body have been appointed since the previous monitoring visit in November 2011.

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

'There are comprehensive systems to monitor pupils' progress in English and maths. These provide senior and core subject leaders with reliable data. The data allows leaders to focus their interventions more specifically on any remaining weaknesses in provision as well as build an accurate picture of pupils' overall achievements. Although the most recent assessments show slow progress in pupils' reading at Year 4, throughout the rest of the school this is an improving picture, so that by Year 7 achievement in reading is good. Similarly, for writing, the progress pupils are now making continues to improve with the majority of pupils on track to achieve their challenging end-of-year targets. This is in part due to the improving quality of teaching with a particular focus on engaging pupils more closely in the regular marking and evaluation of their work. In the best lessons observed by inspectors pupils were provided with stimulating activities that built successfully on their prior knowledge and these were closely matched to their learning needs. Teachers maintained a good balance of directed teaching and allowing pupils the time to work for sustained periods independently or in groups. Progress in mathematics has not been as strong, particularly for the youngest children. However, assessment data show pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly in the upper school, is strengthening with a growing majority of pupils securely on track to meet their end-of-year targets. This is because the subject leader provides a confident lead on developing the curriculum for mathematics and is working closely with staff to strengthen their subject knowledge.

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

- Rapidly accelerate progress and raise attainment more consistently for all pupils:
  - satisfactory

## **The quality of teaching**

The work to strengthen the quality of teachers' marking and the feedback they provide to pupils has been successfully implemented this term. A new marking and feedback policy has been developed and now ensures continuity of provision and expectation throughout the school. The inspector spoke at length with a selection of pupils who are responding very positively to these changes. All the pupils who spoke to the inspector, including some with special educational needs and disabilities, were unanimous in their appreciation of the efforts teachers are going to in providing helpful, personalised guidance to improve their work. Teachers similarly are beginning to see the value of time spent in the careful marking of pupils' work and the impact this is having on closing any gaps in pupils' achievements. The school council and members of the governing body have been involved in the evaluation of this new strategy. Similarly, senior leaders are aware of the importance of monitoring this strategy closely to guard against work overload for teachers.

The school's analysis of monitoring data shows that although the quality of teaching overall is improving there is still an unacceptably high percentage of teaching that is no better than satisfactory. However, the trend is one of improvement, showing a growing proportion of good and better teaching, particularly in the upper school. The most recent monitoring data reflects this improvement with a large majority of all teaching now considered to be good or better. For example, more lessons contain effective questioning by teachers that builds on pupils' prior knowledge, challenges and extends their thinking so that they make good progress in the lesson. In order to promote even more good and better teaching in all year groups senior leaders have devised a personalised programme of support, to be delivered in the summer term, for those remaining teachers who have been identified as needing additional support.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour remains good in lessons and around the school. Systems to support and supervise pupils at all times are fully embedded. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to their enjoyment and learning, despite some lessons that fail to capitalise fully on their enthusiasm. Pupils are respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. They know how to keep themselves safe in and around the school. Pupils' attendance and their punctuality at school and in lessons since the previous monitoring inspection have improved further and are good. Pupils continue to appreciate the efforts teachers put into making lessons more engaging. For example, Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent visit they made to Hampton Court and drew successfully on this experience to write good quality accounts of the day. Similarly, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson about rotation of shapes, pupils demonstrated how they worked on a variety of appropriately challenging tasks with care and sustained concentration.

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

The headteacher continues to provide incisive and clear leadership. Senior leaders have continued to embed their leadership roles in focused school improvement work. Phase leaders meet weekly with teachers to ensure continuity in the delivery of school improvement initiatives. For example, a whole-school writing initiative has been introduced successfully which includes the regular moderation of pupils' work across the phases. As a result, all teachers now have a better understanding of pupils' writing development. Similarly, communication within the school remains secure and concerns, when they do occasionally arise, are swiftly addressed.

Leaders have continued on building a curriculum which fulfils the school's strap-line to 'dream, aspire and achieve'. Particular attention has been given to creating programmes of work that focus on pupils' skills development and progression across the key stages. Consequently, teachers have been provided with greater opportunities to exercise their professionalism and creativity in the design and implementation of the curriculum. Consequently, links with members of the local community and parents and carers have been strengthened and guidance received from the local authority has been very much appreciated by all staff.

The performance management of teachers is carefully managed. Each teacher has personalised targets that address school improvements as well as targets to accelerate pupils' progress. Although teaching assistants are yet to be included in this process they do receive regular professional development which has strengthened their ability to work more closely with teachers in providing specialised support for pupils and vulnerable groups. Teaching assistants who spoke with the inspector say they feel valued and appreciated for the work they do.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure the headteacher's vision and ambition for the school are shared by all leaders and managers involved in school improvement – good
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders, managers and the governing body in securing improvement – good

## **External support**

External support continues to be helpful and highly valued by the school and focused on strengthening teaching provision. The success in securing consistently good teaching has only been partly successful within the school. As the leadership of the school continues to strengthen the local authority is working to progressively reduce the amount of support it is giving to the school.