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9 March 2012

Mrs C Bell  
Headteacher  
Riverview Primary School  
Suffolk Road  
Burton-on-Trent  
DE15 9HR

Dear Mrs Bell

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Riverview Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 7–8 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in 7 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 – good.

One newly qualified teacher 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 Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the progress made by pupils and raise attainment to at least the national average by July 2012 by ensuring that teachers consistently:
  - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - set work that is appropriately matched to pupils' abilities
  - move learning on at a brisk pace.
  
- Improve pupils' enjoyment of, and behaviour in, lessons by:
  - providing a curriculum that is more closely matched to their interests
  - setting tasks in stimulating and engaging contexts
  - providing pupils with greater opportunities to use and apply their basic skills in a range of subjects.
  
- Increase the rate at which the school improves by ensuring that leaders and managers, including the governing body, take swift and decisive action to deal with weaknesses as soon as they are identified through accurate and robust monitoring of teaching and learning.
  
- Improve attendance to at least 94% by July 2011 by raising the criterion for intervention to 90%.

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

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 7–8 March 2012**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff and pupils, governors, parents, and spoke with a representative from the local authority. I observed 12 lessons.

#### **Context**

Two staff have left the school since the previous monitoring inspection, with two new staff appointed to replace them. One class is being covered by a medium-term supply teacher.

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

The attainment of pupils continues to rise, although it remains below average overall. However, given the previously low starting points of pupils when they joined the school and the much improved progress they are making now in most lessons, achievement is satisfactory. Current school assessment data for Year 6 suggests that these pupils are reaching average attainment in mathematics and reading but not in writing. Good tracking of each child's progress means that intervention is delivered in a timely manner where necessary. Many pupils have a lot of ground to catch up on, but they are all working well in lessons and trying their best with their work. Written work has improved substantially in quality and quantity since September for most classes, and from January this year for the rest.

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

- improve the progress made by pupils and raise attainment to at least the national average by July 2012 – good.

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

The quality of everyday teaching continues to improve; at this visit all teaching observed was good, and some outstanding. There remain occasional moments of more mundane learning but these are short, or caused by unexpected delays in changeover of groups in lessons. Teachers now confidently assess the responses of pupils in class discussions, adapting and inventing quick responses to emerging needs. For example, a few moments of 'brain gym' was called for to liven up everyone after a long assembly. Teachers are much better at getting lesson activities

started quickly and, in all lessons, tasks matched to pupil ability were available from the outset. More-able pupils are now being given difficult work at an earlier stage, so that they do not usually have to plough through easy material to get to the challenge. As a result, pupil progress in lessons is accelerating, with some impressive leaps forward since the start of the calendar year. As basic teaching quality improves, school leaders have turned their attention to improving the interest and engagement of pupils through the curriculum. The first collaboratively planned whole-school project is due to start soon; this approach is providing a great opportunity for staff to express their own interests and enthusiasm, and to engage the pupils in having a voice in what they want to learn.

Teachers are already giving their whole to trying to make the existing curriculum interesting; this 'full-blown down-at-the-pupils'-eye-level approach is most evident in younger-aged classes and it captivates pupils' attention. It makes pupils want to emulate their teachers and try hard. Pupils are involved in raising questions for themselves. Marking provides consistently good praise for good work, and suggestions for improvement, but the latter are still sometimes too generalised and difficult for pupils to actually make a response other than 'oaky dokey'! Pupils are more often than not responding to suggestions for improvements, when they can.

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

- providing a curriculum that is more closely matched to their interests – satisfactory
- setting tasks in stimulating and engaging contexts – good
- providing pupils with greater opportunities to use and apply their basic skills in a range of subjects – good.

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

Pupils behave well in and out of lessons, and are enthusiastic contributors' to class discussions. In most lessons, they get cracking on their activities quickly because teachers have recognised this is the best way to maximise challenge for the range of abilities in each class. There is now a distinctive 'buzz' in lessons because pupils are enjoying their learning and are keen to work hard. It is now rare to see teachers reverting to overt class management techniques. Attendance overall has risen significantly, to be marginally better than the national average in main school, although it is lower in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

- improve pupils' enjoyment of, and behaviour in, lessons – good

- improve attendance – good.

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

The school has resolved some long-standing concerns over teaching quality through the appropriate use of formal competency procedures. The robust and frequent monitoring of teaching quality by the school and the local authority has helped to identify strengths and weaknesses. Over time, staff confidence in their undoubted capacity to teach well is returning. There is now regular practical collaboration between different years and phases of the school. This is allowing the school to plan for a more creative approach to topic work that is enthusing staff as much as children; there is a sense of anticipation developing as the first such whole-school project nears launch. Staff new to the school have been welcomed and say they have been well supported. Longer serving staff have recognised substantial recent improvements, citing a shared sense of common purpose.

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

- increase the rate at which the school improves by ensuring that leaders and managers, including the governing body, take swift and decisive action to deal with weaknesses as soon as they are identified through accurate and robust monitoring of teaching and learning – good.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide useful and effective support for the school, conducting regular formal monitoring visits and providing training for specific aspects of classroom practice. An effective collaboration with a local primary school is providing opportunities for staff to see other practitioners operating in a different setting. The financial management of the school is stable, with clear long-term plans for developing the middle management structure of the school. Staff say they find the range of support and advice helpful.