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Mrs Marie Curtis  
Headteacher  
Ash Grange Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Curtis

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Ash Grange Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 20–21 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

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 Interim Executive Board of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

James Henry  
**Additional inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Ensure that leaders, managers and the governing body take steps urgently to accelerate the pace of improvement by:
  - evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour
  - monitoring all initiatives carefully so that effective practice becomes embedded and inconsistencies eliminated.
  
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that:
  - all entries in the school's single central record are complete and up to date by the end of December 2010
  - all other weaknesses pertaining to safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully addressed by the beginning of March 2011.
  
- By July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics by:
  - setting higher expectations in lessons for pupils' achievement and their rates of working
  - improving the guidance for pupils, particularly through marking which better indicates the next steps in their learning and make more rigorous use of learning targets
  - clarify the roles of teaching assistants so that they support pupils' learning effectively and consistently well
  - paying more attention to pupils' handwriting and presentation.
  
- Develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys.
  
- Improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Ash Grange Primary School**

### **Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 20–21 March 2012**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board of Governors and a representative of the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit, a new assistant headteacher has been appointed with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. An existing member of staff has been given temporary responsibility as Key Stage 1 leader.

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

Attainment continues to rise across the school. School assessments, supported by observations of learning in lessons and evidence of work in pupils' books, show that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to meet government floor standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 in both English and mathematics. This is a significant improvement from standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics in 2011. School assessments show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is expected to rise in reading, writing and mathematics in 2012 from low to be broadly average in mathematics, reading and writing.

The school is now narrowing the gaps between the different groups of pupils and similar pupils nationally. For instance, more able pupils are on track to achieve the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs continue to make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is not consistently good across the school, particularly in reading and writing in lower Key Stage 2 and in mathematics, where there are pockets of satisfactory progress across the school. However, progress in reading is now good across Key Stage 1. This is an improvement since the last monitoring inspection and a significant development since the school was made subject to special measures.

Lesson observations show that pupils continue to develop positive attitudes to their learning. For example, in one lesson pupils enjoyed using an interactive whiteboard to develop their understanding of tens and units and, in another lesson, pupils showed real perseverance when using calculators to find the decimal equivalent of different fractions.

## **The quality of teaching**

While the overall quality of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory, there is an increasing amount of good teaching taking place across the school. Lessons are consistently well planned with tasks that meet the needs of different groups, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers' planning is shared consistently with teaching assistants and clearly identifies their role in lessons. This is a significant improvement from the last monitoring inspection because teaching assistants are now used consistently to support pupils' learning rather than dealing with any disruptive behaviour that may occasionally occur. Consequently, different groups, including the more able and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are often taught in small groups with appropriate adult support. This strategy has a positive effect on increasing pupils' learning and is beginning to narrow the achievement gap between all groups of pupils and pupils nationally. For example, the majority of more able pupils are expected to achieve the higher levels in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012.

Relationships in lessons are good, with teachers often using open-ended questioning to challenge and involve pupils in their learning. However, lessons and small group teaching sessions tend to be adult-led with restricted opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves, particularly for the more able.

Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and effectively use this information to identify gaps in pupils' learning and provide extra support when necessary. Class teachers now use effectively data from assessments to inform future planning to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Since the last monitoring inspection, the school has introduced a new simplified marking system. The marking of pupils' work shows that this system is being followed consistently throughout the school. However, marking with comments for pupils about how to improve their work is more effective in English than mathematics. Opportunities are missed in planning future work for pupils to put into practice advice given in marking. While pupils are involved in assessing the extent of their learning, they are not fully informed about targets they need to achieve to improve over time.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement

- By July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics – good.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

While some pupils continue to display challenging behaviour, this is now not regularly disturbing other pupils' learning. Instances of poor behaviour are often due to individual pupils' social and emotional needs rather than persistent low-level disruption. This has been a gradual process but is a significant improvement since the school was made subject to special measures. There have been no exclusions since the last monitoring inspection. This shows the sustained effectiveness of the approach of all staff in challenging and consistently dealing with inappropriate behaviour as well as constant praise and reward for good behaviour. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes towards learning and school in general. This was seen in lessons and in the playground where pupils were cooperating and playing well and were generally polite towards each other and adults. Pupils are more involved in school life, for example the school council has chosen playground equipment and suggested changes to the lunchtime menu that have been introduced. Learning mentors have just been trained and are being introduced across the school. These actions develop pupils' sense of responsibility and build their self-esteem and enjoyment of school which is reflected in their increasingly positive behaviour.

In order to support pupils' own awareness of staying safe, the school has focused on tackling bullying, particularly name calling and racist comments, through activities such as the anti-bullying week. This has been effective in reducing the number of racist incidents and instances of physical aggression shown by a small number of pupils.

Improvements in raising attendance and improving punctuality have been sustained since the last monitoring inspection, with attendance approaching the national average. The school has strongly focused on reducing the number of persistent absentees by constantly making referrals to the school Education Welfare Officer and where necessary taking legal action against parents and carers whose children are regularly absent from school without legitimate reason.

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

- Develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys – good.
- Improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011 – good.

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

The headteacher, supported by senior and middle leaders, continues to lead effectively the drive for rapid improvement through a strong focus on raising the standard of teaching. This is being achieved through building the leadership capacity in the school. As well as senior leaders monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, middle leaders have now been trained in securely judging the quality of learning in lessons and have undertaken joint lesson observations with senior staff. Feedback has been used to set individual targets for staff in how to further improve their teaching and this is supported by appropriate professional training where necessary. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving across the school and increasing the rate at which pupils learn. This was also observed in lesson observations undertaken during the inspection.

With leadership being successfully shared amongst staff, self-evaluation is not now reliant on one or two senior leaders. Consequently, leaders at all levels know the school well and have clear priorities based on accurate self-evaluation. Senior leaders are successfully implementing a coherent action plan, based on realistic timescales, to address the areas for improvement identified when the school was made subject to special measures. The action plan is being rigorously monitored by the Interim Executive Board of Governors. As a result, the school has made good progress towards addressing all the areas for improvement both since the last monitoring inspection and since being made subject to special measures. Where leadership has been particularly successful is in developing the role of teaching assistants, who are now fully involved in staff meetings and professional training. This has a positive impact in lessons, with teaching assistants now fully focused on supporting the learning of different groups of pupils.

The Interim Executive Board of Governors monitors rigorously progress towards addressing the areas for improvement. They have been concentrating particularly on monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' learning through observations in lessons and providing feedback to teachers and the headteacher. This not only informs school self-evaluation but ensures the school remains strongly focused on improving teaching and learning. The Interim Executive Board of Governors has been building effectively the school's capacity to improve through mentoring and training other governors to take on the role.

Safeguarding procedures are fully in place, with all staff appropriately vetted to ensure they are suitable to work in school. The school has changed the curriculum to include more opportunities to promote pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves safe through teaching topics about the dangers of drugs and being aware of strangers. This is an improvement since the last monitoring inspection.

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

- Ensure that leaders, managers and the governing body take steps urgently to accelerate the pace of improvement – good.
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements – good.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide effective and appropriate support, for example through training for senior leaders in ensuring they make secure judgements about the quality of teaching. As the school continues to improve, the local authority is gradually decreasing the level of support needed.