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21 June 2012

Ms Linda Adams  
Executive Headteacher  
Lansdowne School  
Argyll Close  
Dalyell Road  
London  
SW9 9QL

Dear Ms Adams

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Lansdowne School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 and 20 June 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2012. 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 – satisfactory.

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Lambeth.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012**

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by fully responding to the conclusions of the strategic review of personnel, roles and responsibilities in order to build capacity and bring about improvements in the outcomes for pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers always:
  - use a wide range of approaches and strategies to fully motivate all pupils
  - clearly identify in their planning the needs of individual pupils and how they will be challenged, and in lessons use this information to drive forward pupils' learning
  - consistently use the newly developed behaviour management systems and strategies.
- Improve pupils' communication skills by:
  - formalising and applying a clear policy for teachers' use of signing and pictorial strategies across the curriculum
  - ensuring that reading sessions at the start of the day are used consistently well
  - addressing the weaknesses older pupils have in the methods and strategies they use to decode and synthesise words.
- Ensure there is greater accuracy in the assessments teachers make about pupils' progress.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Lansdowne School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 19 and 20 June 2012**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work including 10 lessons, eight of which were visited with the executive headteacher. A series of short visits were made to reading sessions in each class at the start of the day. In total, 13 teachers were observed. The inspector scrutinised documents such as lesson planning, new school policies and records of governing body, interim executive board and local authority meetings. He held meetings with the executive headteacher, members of the leadership team, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the inspection, an interim head of school has taken up her post. The local authority has used its powers of intervention to replace the governing body with an interim executive board. The executive headteacher has implemented restructuring plans and appointed new staff to some of the key senior and middle leadership positions. These staff are due to take up their appointments in September 2012. The majority of the school's teaching staff will leave the school at the end of the academic year due to the restructuring arrangements.

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

Pupils' rates of progress and levels of attainment remain lower than they are capable of achieving. Systems have been established that enable teachers to better identify and plan for pupils' different levels of ability within their classes. In some classes, this is beginning to ensure that pupils make better progress because they are provided with work which is more appropriately matched to their abilities and takes better account of what they already know and can do. This was observed to be most effective where teachers have responded well to the support they have been given and have diligently used the assessment information provided to them.

Reading sessions at the start of the day now make use of a broader range of communication strategies and are increasingly better structured. This is beginning to improve pupils' progress, although staff do not yet have a comprehensive understanding of how to teach pupils how to decode and synthesise words most effectively. The use of pictorial representation to communicate learning intentions and provide adapted resource materials is improving. As a result, pupils have an increased range of opportunities to access and understand written resources, and this is starting to contribute to improving their communication skills.

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

- Improve pupils' communication skills – satisfactory.

### **The quality of teaching**

The executive headteacher has ensured that teachers have access to accurate and recent information about pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. Policies and procedures have been established by school leaders that specify clearly how this should be used to plan for the needs of individual pupils in each lesson. A common lesson planning document has been provided and revised to ensure that expectations for pupils are clear to teachers.

There has been an inconsistent response to the training and support that teachers have been given and too much teaching still fails to take adequate account of pupils' needs. This results in pupils being given tasks which do not challenge them appropriately and the pace of learning in lessons is often too slow. Some teachers do not understand how to set meaningful learning objectives for lessons and so communicate what successful learning will look like to pupils. The variety and selection of teaching strategies has shown some improvement, such as in the use of data projectors and interactive whiteboards. However, the range of approaches used by teachers remains limited and they do not adapt their plans to ensure pupils remain engaged and motivated throughout the lesson. While the use of teaching assistants is not always planned effectively, staff in these roles often provide effective support because they have responded positively to the changes to routines and systems implemented by the new senior leadership team.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – inadequate.
- Ensure there is greater accuracy in the assessments teachers make about pupils' progress – satisfactory.

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

A common set of classroom rules is now more firmly established. There is more consistent reference to the school's behaviour system during lessons, particularly by teaching assistants. Higher expectations of pupils' behaviour and engagement are continually reinforced and modelled by senior leaders, although not all staff are effective in following their lead. Classrooms are generally purposeful learning environments, and pupils are increasingly engaged with learning as some teachers begin to use more active learning strategies to motivate and interest them more.

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

Prompt action by the executive headteacher and the interim executive board with the support of the local authority has ensured that the restructure of staffing in

response to the strategic review of personnel is proceeding at an appropriate pace. The impact of the changes to leadership and teaching staff is currently limited as the new structure is not due to be fully implemented until the beginning of the new academic year in September 2012. Nevertheless, the appointment of an interim head of school is enabling the new leadership team to establish systems and practices that are beginning to address the most endemic areas of weakness across the school. For example, clear guidelines have been provided about the structure of lessons and teachers' implementation of this policy is monitored by the head of school through frequent visits to lessons.

Regular formal and informal monitoring by the executive headteacher is ensuring that she has an accurate and up-to-date view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. School improvement planning is well focused and dynamically evaluated. Required changes to policies, including the total communication policy, are being implemented to support the necessary improvements. In certain areas, appropriate decisions have been taken to defer significant training. For example, the use of the school's chosen signed language system has been postponed until the start of the next academic year so that the new staff team develop consistent approaches.

Capacity within the leadership team is gradually being built as staff are recruited into permanent roles or long-term secondments. For example, the middle leader who will be responsible for English from September 2012 is currently serving in the same role at the federation partnership school. This has enabled essential preparatory work to be completed, particularly to support improvements to the communication aspects of the curriculum.

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

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by fully responding to the conclusions of the strategic review of personnel, roles and responsibilities in order to build capacity and bring about improvements in the outcomes for pupils – satisfactory.

### **External support**

The local authority and the federation partnership school are providing satisfactory support. The local authority's statement of action has been appropriately amended to address the weaknesses identified when it was first submitted to Ofsted. The authority has taken appropriate action to secure the support of experienced and suitable personnel to make up the interim executive board. Although the board has only recently been constituted, the members are active within the school and have demonstrated their support for the senior leaders. The executive headteacher is drawing on the expertise of other schools to support teachers' professional development and, where this is well targeted, this is promoting improved teaching effectively.