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22 June 2012

Miss E Morris and Miss L Brammah  
Headteacher  
Pickering Community Junior School  
Middleton Road  
Pickering  
North Yorkshire  
YO18 8AJ

Dear Miss Morris and Miss Brammah

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Pickering Community Junior School**

Following my visit with Robert Jones, Additional inspector, to your school on 20 and 21 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 is 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 North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment and improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics, especially for boys, those who are low-attaining, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are more able by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve each year and by the end of the key stage
  - implementing regular, focused teaching for those pupils who struggle with reading so that their skills in knowing letters and sounds are sufficient for them to write with confidence and access all other learning
  - ensuring all learning proceeds at an appropriate pace and pupils are actively involved in their own learning.
  
- Improve the use of assessment to ensure the quality of teaching is at least good by:
  - using accurate data on pupils' progress that identifies individual gaps in learning
  - using assessment information to provide tasks and activities that are specifically tailored to the needs of individual pupils and groups
  - assessing pupils as they learn so that teaching can be adapted quickly to respond to their needs
  - having a consistent, effective approach to marking and feedback
  - tracking pupils' progress, including that of significant groups, more frequently and setting ambitious targets for what all pupils can achieve.
  
- Implement a consistent and effective approach to dealing with low-level disruption and poor behaviour.
  
- With immediate effect, address issues raised during this inspection to ensure that all pupils are fully safeguarded.
  
- Increase the impact of all leaders and managers, including the governing body, on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching by:
  - raising their expectations
  - developing their skills of monitoring and evaluation
  - adapting school development planning to focus on the areas that will make the greatest difference to pupils' achievement
  - refining subject action plans to include clear, measurable outcomes and well-defined timescales, so as to measure their impact effectively.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Pickering Community Junior School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 June 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the two acting headteachers, senior and middle leaders, staff, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives of the local authority.

#### **Context**

The substantive headteacher at the time of the inspection left the school in April 2012. The local authority arranged for two acting headteachers to be seconded to the school to share leadership and management responsibilities until the end of the summer term 2012. An experienced headteacher from within the authority will lead the school from September 2012, while the governing body seek to make a permanent appointment.

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

Results of the end of Year 6 national tests in 2011, showed that attainment in English and mathematics was broadly average. An analysis of school-held data and the outcomes of lesson observations undertaken by senior leaders and inspectors during the monitoring inspection indicate that test results in 2012 are likely to be broadly similar. However, significant groups of learners, including those who are low-attaining, have special educational needs and those who are more able, are not making the progress of which they are capable as they move through the school. Challenging targets for the pupils' progress and attainment are not in place across the school and regular meetings between class teachers and senior leaders in order to evaluate the progress made by each pupil have yet to be established. As a result, teachers' expectations are too low and this is inhibiting progress.

In order to support the development of pupils' reading skills, daily guided-reading sessions and focused teaching of phonics in Year 3 have been introduced recently. The quality of these sessions is variable because some teachers lack the skills and knowledge required to teach these sessions successfully. The school's leaders are aware of this deficiency and they have embarked on a training programme designed to secure improved provision. However, improvements in pupils' reading skills have yet to be realised.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- raise attainment and improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics, especially for boys, those who are low-attaining, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are more able - inadequate.

## **The quality of teaching**

The overall quality of teaching observed during the previous inspection was generally satisfactory but this did not result in all groups of pupils making sufficient progress to attain in line with their capabilities. This remains the case. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from inadequate to good. The variability in teaching as pupils move through the school means that the rate at which they progress is uneven. This results in pupils having gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in English and mathematics, which prevent them from fulfilling their potential. Furthermore, even when teaching is good it is not always consistently so over time. Pupils make better progress when teachers consciously assess the quality of learning during lessons and use the information to plan future work. This was a feature of the good lessons observed during the inspection. However, this is not the norm: in the majority of lessons observed by inspectors there was no evidence of teachers using a systematic approach to assessing how well the pupils were doing and adapting their planning accordingly to move learning forward. Teachers' planning is insufficiently precise about what pupils are to learn during the lesson and plenary sessions are not well designed to gauge pupils' understanding. The lack of skilful assessment during lessons results in work that is not accurately matched to pupils' learning needs. This limits progress and also contributes to some pupils' poor attitudes to learning. Most pupils are aware that they have targets in relation to English and mathematics, but not all can remember what they are or what they are for. Older pupils referred to levels, others to specific aspects of English or mathematics. However, pupils receive little or no regular feedback on their progress. The quality of marking is inconsistent across the school with some that strikes a good balance between evaluation and guidance as to how they may improve. There is little evidence to suggest that there is a close link between marking and pupils' individual targets.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve the use of assessment to ensure the quality of teaching is at least good – inadequate.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

During the previous inspection instances of poor behaviour around school were common. This is no longer the case. The two acting headteachers have acted promptly in a short space of time to address staff, pupil and parent concerns about behaviour management. A consistent approach to behaviour management is now in place and adhered to by staff. Pupils understand that there are consequences for their actions and appreciate that the process is fair. Behaviour observed during lessons over the course of the inspection was at least satisfactory and in some cases good. While the behaviour of the majority of pupils has improved, some are behaving because they are being closely monitored. Once the supervision lapses, behaviour can deteriorate. There is a direct link between the quality of teaching, behaviour and progress as seen in pupils' attitudes to learning. Where teaching is well-planned to meet the pupils' learning needs, stimulating and engaging, pupils display

positive attitudes and make better progress. As teaching is inconsistent so are pupils' attitudes and progress is therefore uneven.

The current leaders have responded quickly to a number of safeguarding issues. Appropriate steps have been taken to secure the site and pupils' movement around the school, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day. The single central record meets requirements.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- implement a consistent and effective approach to dealing with low-level disruption and poor behaviour – satisfactory
- with immediate effect, address issues raised during this inspection to ensure that all pupils are fully safeguarded – satisfactory.

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

Following the previous inspection it is clear that the school did not respond with sufficient urgency and rigour in addressing the areas identified as requiring improvement. This is no reflection on the current school leadership team. The two acting headteachers have only been in post a matter of weeks and have provided good support and direction to staff and pupils during this time. Together they have successfully brought about improvements in safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. They have also secured the support of staff who recognise that much work needs to be done and want to play their part in improving provision and, as such, they are to be commended.

There has been insufficient time to bring about significant improvements to the key areas of leadership and management, teaching and learning and overall achievement since the appointment of the current leadership team. Plans for securing improvement based on accurate self-evaluation have been drawn up but there remains much for leaders to do at all levels before improvements are embedded and achievement rises. Initial steps have been taken by senior leaders to monitor teaching and learning and they are conscious of the importance of drawing on the good practice evident in the school to develop the skills of all teachers further. The deputy headteacher has not been sufficiently involved in activities related to school improvement in the past but there are plans to rectify this. Middle leaders, particularly those responsible for English and mathematics, have only been in post a very short time and as yet have been unable to make a contribution to the school improvement process. Subject plans arising from a careful audit of provision that include clear, measurable outcomes and specific timescales so as to measure their impact are yet to be established. However, the willingness and determination to develop the necessary skills to fulfil both of these roles is evident and this augurs well for the future. The governing body has responded well to the outcome of the inspection. Governors are better informed of the requirements of their role and are beginning to be better informed about the work of the school. They are developing a good appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and, most importantly, they show a determination to hold school leaders to account.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- increase the impact of all leaders and managers, including the governing body, on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching – inadequate.

### **External support**

The local authority's statement of action for the school is fit for purpose. The response by the local authority in securing the short-term leadership of the school has proved beneficial.