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28 September 2012

Ms Sarah Butterworth  
Headteacher  
Newtown Primary School  
Buxton Road  
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High Peak  
SK22 3JS

Dear Ms Butterworth

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Newtown Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26–27 September 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have taken place since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

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 Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics so that by July 2013 attainment at the end of Year 6 is at least in line with national averages, by:
  - setting ambitious targets for pupils based on prior attainment and robustly monitoring their progress towards these targets
  - improving the quality of teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve
  - providing opportunities for pupils to respond to marking and to correct their work
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn independently through their own research using books and information and communication technology (ICT), and to discuss their work and explain their thinking
  - teaching more lessons in which pupils have to think creatively, work in teams and solve problems.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour so that they are consistently good or better by April 2013, by:
  - eliminating inadequate teaching
  - using accurate assessment information to plan lessons that are matched to the learning needs of all pupils
  - planning learning activities that are consistently stimulating and challenging, and inspire pupils to work hard
  - improving teachers' questioning skills so that they are better able to develop pupils' understanding.
  
- Improve the curriculum so that pupils:
  - learn knowledge and skills sequentially and progressively
  - practice their communication and numeracy skills routinely in other subjects
  - benefit from learning activities that routinely enthuse and interest them.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - involving all stakeholders in establishing a clear vision and direction for the school
  - ensuring that school improvement targets are firmly focused on improving the quality of teaching
  - introducing systemic procedures to monitor the work of the school and to implement actions to address areas of underperformance
  - developing the skills of subject leaders so that they are better able to lead and improve the subject for which they are accountable.

## **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 26-27 September 2012**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, groups of pupils, the local authority education improvement adviser, and carried out a telephone discussion with the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector visited all classes to observe teaching and learning and evaluated a sample of pupils' work.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, there have been no significant contextual changes. However, since September 2012, one member of staff has been on long-term sickness absence.

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

Unpublished results of national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2012 show that the proportion making expected progress in reading and mathematics, based on prior attainment, was broadly average. The proportion making expected progress in writing was below the national average. First-hand evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of work confirms that progress across the school remains variable from year to year and class to class. Since the previous inspection, revised assessment and tracking systems have been introduced across the school; these are beginning to provide senior leaders with more reliable progress data over time. Challenging targets have been set for all pupils, but there is much to do because of the inadequate progress in the past for many pupils. Pupils' progress is not fast enough because the teaching in too few lessons is good or better, and in some it is inadequate.

There are some improvements to the school's approach to marking. However, marking is not yet consistently linked to pupils' targets or success criteria and rarely contains specific comments that ensure pupils know what they need to do to improve. Pupils report that they do not have regular, planned time to review or respond to marking. As a result, there are missed opportunities to consolidate and extend learning. Pupils are unsure of their targets and do not clearly understand the next steps in their learning.

Pupils report that in some classes they are enjoying more opportunities to work collaboratively but rarely have opportunities to lead their own learning. Teachers are not making sufficient use of stimulating approaches to learning that capture pupils' imagination, including effective use of information and communication technology.

## **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching has not improved since the previous inspection. The school has introduced a number of initiatives to bring about improvement. However, the impact of these new developments remains inconsistent and the quality of teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.

Planning is variable and new systems introduced since the previous inspection are not consistently applied across the school. Learning objectives are shared at the beginning of most lessons. Success criteria are not always defined sharply enough for different groups of pupils and the 'steps for success' are not always fully understood. In too many lessons, teachers do not provide a clear structure for developing pupils' learning in a step by step approach. Consequently, pupils' understanding is limited and they are unsure about what they have learnt. Often, the teacher spends too much time talking and there is too much emphasis on what adults will be doing in lessons, with too little focus on what the pupils will learn and what they need to do to achieve success. Additionally, low expectations about the amount of work pupils should be doing compound this lack of clarity and result in slow progress for too many pupils. In most lessons, there are positive relationships between pupils and adults.

Information about what pupils know already is not used well enough to plan lessons or to check pupils' understanding during the lesson. Too frequently, work is not well matched to the range of pupils' attainment. There are too many missed opportunities to evaluate how well pupils are progressing in lessons. As a result, assessments about pupils' progress are not firmly rooted in first-hand evidence and lessons are not planned to meet the needs of all pupils.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are polite and friendly and generally respond well to the way that teachers manage their behaviour. However, their attitudes to learning often reflect the low demands placed upon them, and they are relaxed, rather than focused and enthusiastic learners. Pupils report that they enjoy good friendships because there is little intimidating behaviour and they feel safe at school.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders, supported by the local authority, are beginning to bring a clearer sense of direction and educational purpose to the school's work. Senior leaders are beginning to have a greater awareness of the issues raised at the last inspection and how they might be tackled to bring about secure and sustained improvements. They have introduced a number of important changes such as changes to teachers' planning, arrangements for managing pupils' behaviour and systems for assessing pupils' progress more regularly. These actions have the

potential to raise standards and hold teachers' to account but, to date, they are not having a sufficiently positive impact in eliminating weaknesses, particularly in teaching and learning.

New systems for monitoring teaching and learning have been established since the previous inspection. However, these systems lack the rigour required to secure consistently good teaching in all classes. For example, where teaching which is less than good has been observed, the recorded areas for development are not sufficiently detailed or prioritised as targets for improvement, and there are no review dates for following up whether teachers have improved their practice. Additionally, the impact of teaching on the pupils' learning and their progress in lessons is not given sufficient priority in written records of monitoring and evaluation activities. Some staff do not have a clear understanding of what is required to ensure that lessons result in pupils making good progress.

The role of subject leaders in leading and driving improvement is underdeveloped. They are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the progress of pupils in their subject areas. As a result, they do not have an accurate picture of the strengths and areas to develop and do not play a key role in raising attainment.

The governing body has undertaken a range of training related to their role in challenging the school and holding leaders to account. There is evidence that they are developing a clearer understanding of their role and have a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet requirements.

The previous inspection report asked the school to improve the curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils in all classes. The work to review and adapt the curriculum has been slow-moving and little has been achieved to date.

### **External support**

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose and provides a useful framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work to address the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The local authority has secured the services of a local leader in education to provide support for the headteacher, as well as a teaching, learning and assessment consultant to support all staff. Good support and training has been provided for governors. However, despite this intensive support, little progress has been made because the school's own monitoring, particularly of teaching and learning, does not emulate that of the local authority.