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14 December 2012

Mrs Lizzie Blount  
Headteacher  
Croft Primary School  
Station Road  
Sutton-in-Ashfield  
NG17 5FJ

Dear Mrs Blount

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Croft Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 12–13 December 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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.

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 Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress through the school, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that the teaching is consistently good, based on:
  - using information about the levels at which pupils are working to provide activities that match closely to their abilities and provide a good level of challenge
  - setting targets in literacy and numeracy which are known and understood by pupils and of which they have ownership
  - marking that informs pupils regularly of their achievements and the next steps in their learning.
  
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school and provide support for the headteacher in her drive to raise attainment levels, by making sure that:
  - senior leaders have roles, responsibilities and accountability for moving the school forward in key aspects of school improvement, including the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment
  - middle leaders have greater impact on improving the outcomes in subjects for which they are responsible
  - the governing body monitors and evaluates the school's performance comprehensively so that it can challenge the school and influence its direction.

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

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 12–13 December 2012**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, looked carefully at school documents and met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, a group of pupils, representatives from the governing body, and the local authority education improvement adviser. All lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

#### **Context**

Since the previous inspection a new, substantive deputy headteacher has been appointed who took up post in September 2012. Three members of staff are currently on maternity leave. Two of these posts are being covered by teachers on fixed term contracts and one by an internal change of role.

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

The 2012 unvalidated Key Stage 2 national test results show an improvement on those of the previous year, with overall attainment in line with the national average. There was a rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in both English and mathematics. However, few pupils exceeded the levels expected for their age. The picture is also positive with regard to the Year 2 national assessments with improvements in all subjects and at all levels. However, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment remains below the national average. The progress made by the outgoing Year 6 pupils between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics was close to the national median. In other year groups, the school's most recent data confirm that there is still some variation between year groups, as well as between those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs. However, taking account of pupils' often low starting points and the legacy of underachievement that still remains, the school is now strengthening its position to help an increasing proportion of pupils make the good progress necessary to close the gaps in their learning.

The school is working hard to lift pupils' attainment further. Staff and pupils understand that there is now a very strong focus on learning and progress and on raising attainment. Since the previous monitoring visit, the quality of pupils' learning has improved. Teaching is becoming more consistent and rigorous assessment systems quickly identify any pupils who are falling behind and who require additional support.

Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teachers have a clear understanding of how young children learn and consequently, children enjoy an exciting range of activities where they are encouraged to explore, experiment and interact with each other.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous monitoring visit and is enabling pupils to catch up on existing gaps in their learning. Over half of the lessons observed during the monitoring visit were good. Where teaching is good, there is a clear focus on using assessment information to match work to pupils' needs. This is raising teachers' expectations and, as a result, they are planning work which provides appropriate challenge for most pupils. The impact of this can be seen in pupils' improved engagement in their learning and in their improved understanding of what they have to do to succeed and to move their learning forward. In those lessons that required improvement, the pace of learning was not sufficiently brisk. Pupils failed to make good progress because teachers did not strike the correct balance between pupils listening and working, and the independent activities did not provide them with the right level of challenge to extend their learning further. Teachers work hard to make classrooms attractive and purposeful learning environments. All classrooms have a range of effective working walls which are used regularly to support learning. Teaching assistants have responded well to training. They make a valuable contribution to all lessons and frequently demonstrate good subject knowledge. The inspection evidence confirms the school's view that there is now a greater proportion of good teaching. However, the school recognises that there is more to do to ensure that teaching is consistently good in all classes.

An increasing number of pupils are aware of the levels they are working at and know what their targets are. Marking is good. Teachers provide pupils with helpful comments so that they can check and correct their work and understand what they need to do to improve it and meet their targets. This good practice also includes growing opportunities for pupils to respond to marking, as well as the chance to evaluate their own and other pupils' work.

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress through the school, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that the teaching is consistently good – satisfactory.

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

The school is successfully nurturing an atmosphere of care and respect for all. This is reflected in the increasingly positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are becoming more enthusiastic learners whose behaviour is often good and

consequently, makes a positive contribution to the effectiveness of learning. However, where lessons require improvement, pupils are relaxed, rather than focused and enthusiastic learners. Pupils continue to say that they feel safe in school and enjoy good friendships, with no fear of intimidating behaviour.

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

The headteacher is building securely on the foundations established last term. She is well supported by the new deputy headteacher and together they are committed to moving the school forward. Senior leaders have a clearer view of what needs to be done and how to effect change. Improved and systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is providing senior leaders with a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Challenging targets and regular meetings about pupils' progress emphasise teachers' accountability for raising pupils' achievement. All staff are taking responsibility for moving the school forward and are working hard to secure improvement.

The roles of middle leaders are now clearly defined and understood. They have appropriate management time to carry out their duties and are valued as equal members of the leadership team. They are regularly involved in a range of monitoring activities which are both rigorous and accurate. The impact of their participation in a national leadership training programme is evident in the way they are driving forward improvements for which they are responsible and, as a result, leadership has strengthened.

The governing body is developing a clearer understanding of its roles and responsibilities and has a sharp focus on pupils' achievement. Members of the governing body are developing their skills to enable them to understand the pupils' achievement data provided by the school. Discussion with representatives of the governing body confirms that it is challenging the information presented to it by the school in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. As a result, the school's effectiveness in tackling areas for improvement is strengthening.

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

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school and provide support for the headteacher in her drive to raise attainment levels – good.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided effective and timely support to the school since the previous monitoring visit. The school particularly appreciates the challenge and guidance of the education improvement adviser. The school continues to receive good support from a local leader of education through a school-to-school partnership brokered by the local authority.