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25 January 2013

Mrs J Walker  
Anston Brook Primary School  
Ryton Road  
North Anston  
Sheffield  
S25 4DN

Dear Mrs Walker

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Anston Brook Primary School**

Following my visit, to your school on 23 and 24 January 2013, 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 been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the second 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 and Young People's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' progress accelerates and attainment rises by ensuring that:
  - the requirements of the national curriculum in English and mathematics are fully implemented so that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are comprehensively and progressively developed
  - work is well matched to the needs and prior attainment of all groups of pupils and is appropriately challenging for all
  - marking and feedback are regular and provide clear information for pupils on how well they are doing and how to improve their work so that they make swifter progress and reach their targets.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - all leaders develop the range of knowledge and skills necessary to play a full role in monitoring the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility and in taking successful action to bring about improvement
  - all information about the effectiveness of the school, including how pupils are progressing, is analysed rigorously in order to identify what actions need to be taken to bring about improvement and which are then swiftly implemented
  - monitoring activities focus on assessing the impact of action taken to improve pupils' outcomes.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 January 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed all teachers jointly with the executive headteacher. He examined documents and met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, and consultant headteachers from the local authority.

### **Context**

A new Chair of Governors has been appointed. One member of staff left the school in the autumn term. A new co-ordinator for special educational needs has been appointed.

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

Pupils' attainment in 2012 rose, reversing a decline over the previous two years. The published results highlight a significant variation between subjects in relation to the proportion of 11-year-olds reaching the expected Level 4. In mathematics this proportion was broadly average, in English it was considerably below average. Fewer boys than girls reached the expected standard in English.

Pupils' progress improved in 2012, but fewer made the progress expected from their starting points, to reach Level 4 or above in both English and mathematics. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils meeting the required standard in the national screening check of their knowledge of letters and sounds was a little above average. Teacher assessment shows an increase in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. However, school leaders are not confident about the accuracy of assessment at Key Stage 1.

Teacher assessment of the current Year 6 indicates that past underachievement has not been overcome. In the last term, the progress of Year 6 pupils has begun to increase but is still not sufficient from pupils' starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' attainment has not reached the national average, especially in writing and mathematics. The school is planning to introduce tutoring for individuals and small groups in Year 6 in order to accelerate their progress further. Other classes at Key Stage 2 have also improved their progress in the last term. Year 3 and Year 5 have reached the level expected for their age but Year 4 is still behind. The school has identified that for some pupils progress has not demonstrably improved, especially in reading. The school has begun to regularly assess and check the progress of disabled pupils and those needing extra help. Early evidence shows that these pupils have recently started to improve their progress in reading and writing. However, there is no evidence of similar improvement by pupils with special educational needs in mathematics. At Key Stage 1, the quality of learning remains uneven and is weaker when pupils are not sufficiently clear about what they are learning and why.

Overall, pupils are making better progress because of the clearer direction provided in lessons. Pupils have a better understanding of what it is they are supposed to learn and of what they need to do to improve. The new rewards and recognition given for achievement motivate them, and the more interactive and imaginative activities in lessons engages them more in learning.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching has improved and there is a higher proportion of good teaching. A few aspects of teaching remain inadequate when lessons lack purpose, explanations and tasks are unclear and instructions and activities are too mechanical and do not engage pupils sufficiently well.

Overall, the quality of teaching has improved because teachers have developed a common approach to planning lessons based on clearly stated objectives. The 'stars for success' show each ability group, in each lesson, what skill they are learning and what they need to do to make progress. This provides a stronger framework for teaching, a better match between activities and the pupils' stage of development, and stronger motivation and guidance. These new approaches to teaching are being used with greater consistency and confidence by teachers and are understood well by pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the improved use of learning objectives, and a stronger focus on the early development of reading and writing, has heightened the quality of learning.

Topics are being used more imaginatively and effectively to provide a purpose for writing and a context for mathematics. The use of video and other stimulating and practical resources have made English and mathematics lessons more interesting and fun. The increased range of visits is being used constructively to extend pupils learning experiences and provide more opportunities for writing. The stronger emphasis on practical problem-solving has increased the opportunities for pupils to think logically and discuss their methods in mathematics. The addition of computers and computer programs for individual use motivates pupils, and enables them to work with concentration, to improve their English and mathematics. The quality of dialogue in classrooms has improved as teachers have developed their skills in the use of questioning to support learning. The questions asked are probing pupils to think and reflect rather than always demanding immediate answers. On occasion, tasks are not clearly enough explained, and resources not well enough prepared to support good independent learning.

The separate group for pupils with special educational needs, set up in the autumn term, has been discontinued and pupils have successfully re-joined their classes. Teaching assistants now provide better individual support for pupils with the greatest needs. They are also taking a stronger role in small group activities and have begun to play a role in marking when pupils work in small groups.

Teachers are better informed about the progress of individuals and groups. They use this information to focus lesson planning more accurately on the skills pupils need to learn. Marking has improved and is more consistent. Teachers are more systematically giving praise for skills that have been demonstrated and specific guidance on how to improve. Marking is more frequent and now informs lesson-planning daily. It has recently improved further by creating time for pupils to respond to teachers' comments or questions.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning have continued to improve. They are increasingly well motivated by the display of progress charts, reading records and the stars for success that they receive. These encourage a more purposeful and stimulating learning environment. Pupils are making a stronger contribution to the learning in lessons because of their greater sense of direction and involvement. In 2012, attendance improved and was broadly average.

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

The introduction of a common set of procedures for the planning of teaching and the conduct of lessons has raised expectations of staff and pupils and improved the quality and consistency of teaching. Displays in classrooms and corridors provide stronger guidance, communicate higher expectations and set a more positive climate for learning. The strong professional links with the partner school have increased the staff's understanding of good teaching and have provided valuable support for subject and school leaders.

The executive headteacher has accelerated the rate of improvement as a result of the new approaches that were introduced in the summer and autumn terms. Her direction and drive have improved the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of leadership and management. Her enthusiasm and optimism have improved the morale of staff and the engagement of pupils. She has developed a strong partnership with the head of school and they now form an effective team. However, not all inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Improving the progress and attainment of the current Year 6 to overcome past underachievement remains a key challenge.

The head of school has implemented a more effective system for measuring and checking pupil progress. This has improved teachers' understanding of the progress their pupils are making and the actions needed to accelerate pupils' learning. The accountability of subject leaders and teachers has improved as a result of the introduction of regular meetings to discuss pupil progress. Parents are informed more frequently about their children's progress against their targets.

In their first term, the new leaders of English and mathematics have begun to improve the quality of their subjects. They have reviewed teaching and marking in their subject areas and have begun to use assessment data to analyse strengths and weakness in pupils' progress. They have sought pupils' views to gauge the impact of new approaches to teaching and learning in English and mathematics. The subject leaders are reflective and analytical and their action plans demonstrate a more systematic approach to monitoring and developing teachers' subject expertise.

The recently appointed co-ordinator for special educational needs has introduced a more robust approach to the management of this provision. The planning of additional support is better organised as a result. The deployment of teaching assistants is more purposeful. Time-limited programmes of support have been initiated with measures of impact. More formal reviews of pupils' progress and meetings with parents have started. Data and individual targets have begun to be identified to evaluate the progress of pupils with special needs. It is too early to judge the impact of these actions on the progress of pupils.

The new Chair of Governors and the governing body have developed a more structured approach to checking the school's work. Two small committees of governors have begun to check pupils' performance more frequently and to monitor the implementation of subject plans more systematically. Governors are now receiving better information with which to judge pupils' progress and they are questioning reports from school leaders more thoroughly.

### **External support**

Local authority consultants have provided effective support for new subject co-ordinators in English, mathematics and special needs. A review by the local authority of the provision for special educational needs provided helpful direction. The consultant headteacher provides helpful support in checking the quality of teaching and supporting the executive headteacher.

The partnership with the local primary school continues to play an important role in driving school improvement by promoting the development of teaching and support staff and new school leaders. The link has supported the development of a broader, more imaginative curriculum and shared activities by pupils at both schools. Teachers have improved the reliability of their assessments as a result of regular checks with the partner school and the wider group of schools in the learning community.