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1 February 2013

Mrs Margaret Brownlee  
Headteacher  
Castleford Redhill Junior School  
Stansfield Drive  
Airedale  
Castleford  
West Yorkshire  
WF10 3DB

Dear Mrs Brownlee

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Castleford Redhill Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 and 30 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 previous monitoring 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve teaching to raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - using assessment information to provide learning activities which challenge pupils of all abilities and are well matched to their needs
  - using questioning which reflects teachers' understanding of pupils' abilities
  - providing marking and feedback that tells pupils the next steps they need to take.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that the behaviour policy is implemented consistently.
- Raise attendance levels to at least the national average by:
  - making sure that pupils understand the importance of good attendance to achieving well
  - giving pupils ownership of their attendance through individual targets.
- Strengthen the quality and impact of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
  - all leaders and managers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities that match their skills and the school's priorities, and for which they are held to account
  - there are improved systems for tracking pupils' achievement
  - teaching is monitored rigorously and weaker teaching eradicated
  - whole-school curriculum planning incorporates developing and using literacy and numeracy skills across subjects
  - planned programmes are in place for all areas of learning
  - the governing body develops an accurate knowledge and understanding of its roles and responsibilities quickly so that it provides support and challenge through regular monitoring, review and evaluation.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 29 and 30 January 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work including seven part lessons, of which six were jointly observed with the headteacher, and scrutinised documents including samples of pupils' work. The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), a representative of the local authority, the executive headteacher providing support for the school and some pupils from Years 3 and 4.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection a part-time parental support worker has been appointed.

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

School data suggest that pupils' achievement is beginning to improve. However, the extent of improvement varies between subjects, year groups and individual pupils. Current assessment data for pupils in Year 6 indicate attainment at the end of the key stage is likely to rise to above the government's current floor standard (the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress). Despite this more positive picture, progress relative their starting points for some Year 6 pupils remains a concern. Similarly, leaders have accurately identified that in other year groups, for example, in Year 5, pupils need to make more rapid and sustained progress in mathematics to tackle past underperformance. In some lessons, pupils are making good progress, but overall, progress is too variable and sometimes specific groups of pupils do not learn as well as they should.

The extensive moderation of pupils' work to secure the accuracy of assessment and improved systems to track pupils' progress are helping to ensure pupils who are not making the progress expected are being identified more quickly. The range of strategies being used to help accelerate pupils' progress has been increased and there are early signs that this additional teaching is having a positive impact on improving pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils in the nurture group are receiving individualised support to enable them to develop the basic skills needed to access the mainstream curriculum. Some pupils who accessed this provision in the autumn term have made sufficient gains in their learning and skills to return successfully to their usual whole-class teaching group. Since the last monitoring inspection, the school has focused on improving the use of targets to support pupils' learning. As a result, pupils have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve the quality of their work and in some lessons observed pupils were trying to address their targets when completing activities.

## **The quality of teaching**

The steadily improving quality of teaching over time is reflected in better pupil progress and rising attainment. Teachers have willingly embraced whole-school training and other professional development opportunities but there has been much for staff to take on board in a short period of time. Consequently, some potentially effective teaching strategies have not become embedded in the practice of all staff and the quality of teaching in lessons observed during the inspection was more variable than at the time of the last monitoring visit.

Stronger features of teaching include:

- the clear use of success criteria or exemplification of the features of a successful piece of work
- activities that build on prior learning and are well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities
- learning set in a context that interests and engages pupils in the task and promotes their enjoyment
- good use of questions to explore pupils' understanding and extend their learning
- the use of 'thinking time' to allow pupils to reflect on their learning and the use of 'talking partners' to enable pupils to discuss and develop their ideas
- reference to pupils' targets to 'remind' individuals what they need to be focusing on in their work
- teachers' ability to reflect on their own teaching after the lesson and identify how learning and progress could have been improved for individuals or groups.

Aspects of teaching in lessons that lead to less effective learning include:

- a lack of challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able
- insufficient use of assessment to adjust teaching during a lesson
- introductions to learning that are too lengthy
- limited use of prompts or displays that show resources, such as worked examples or key features of a writing genre, to support pupils' independent learning.

The marking policy has been reviewed and pupils are receiving more consistent feedback on what has gone well and guidance on the next steps in their learning. Pupils are beginning take more responsibility for their own learning by reflecting and responding to teachers' comments, addressing incorrect spelling and making corrections to their work. This good practice is currently more evident in some classes than others.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Observation of lessons confirms that pupils' learning behaviours are improving. Most are more confident to tackle tasks independently, although, a few pupils remain less focused which slows their pace of learning. Some pupils also need to develop further the social and emotional skills required to work cooperatively and collaboratively with their peers. The number of recorded incidents of inappropriate behaviour has continued to decline. However, there has been a very small rise in the number of more serious behaviour incidents. These have been fully addressed by the school and individual pupils who currently find it difficult to meet the school's expectations for behaviour are receiving additional help and support. Pupils confirm that behaviour at playtimes has improved since last term. However, despite behaviour related issues being dealt with by staff if observed or reported, some pupils remain concerned about the frequency of things like name calling or overly boisterous behaviour at playtimes. The importance of good attendance continues to have a high profile in school. As a result of effective work with pupils and their parents, overall attendance has improved notably compared to a similar period last year and the number of pupils with high levels of absence has declined.

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

The headteacher is continuing her determined drive to secure the rapid improvement the school requires; increasingly other senior and middle leaders are supporting this work. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality and pupil outcomes are more robust and external expertise has been used effectively to confirm the accuracy of judgements. Plans to tackle the areas for improvement have been reviewed and amended to reflect the school's progress and to ensure a sharper focus on emerging priorities. Systems to manage teachers' performance have been strengthened with targets linked to securing improvements in teaching quality and pupil outcomes. Class teachers are developing a better understanding of pupils' performance data and are being more rigorously held to account for pupils' progress. In-house training, opportunities to see practice in other schools and feedback following lesson observations are promoting improvement in teachers' classroom skills.

Internal and external support to help senior and middle leaders develop their skills is having a positive impact. As a result, these leaders are taking more responsibility for leading whole-school improvement and can talk more confidently about the work they have done. Developments since the last monitoring inspection include the introduction of a systematic approach to developing pupils' literacy skills in other subjects and the launch of a whole-school approach to teaching calculations in mathematics. However, much of this work is relatively recent and it is too early to see the impact on pupils' outcomes. Leadership developments in subjects other than literacy and mathematics are at an early stage.

Since the last monitoring inspection, members of the IEB have developed a much better working knowledge of the school. This knowledge, combined with their professional expertise and skills, has increased the degree of challenge, rigour of monitoring and sharpness of evaluation provided by governors.

### **External support**

External support is making an effective contribution to the school's improvement. Its impact is regularly reviewed by the local authority, IEB and headteacher and resources are adjusted as necessary to ensure the school's changing needs are well met. Since September, the work of an executive headteacher has provided additional capacity at senior leadership level and other staff in her school have worked with Year 3 teachers to develop their practice. Links with a local academy continue to be valuable; the provision of additional subject expertise, support for leadership development and the delivery of intervention sessions for small groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are helping to address key priorities for improvement. New partnerships, both within the pyramid of schools and beyond, are being used well to accelerate improvement further.