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22 February 2013

Helen Bishton  
Headteacher  
Oakfield School  
Hospital Lane  
Blaby  
Leicester  
LE8 4FE

Dear Ms Bishton

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Oakfield School**

Following my visit to your school on 20–21 February 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 May 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 should 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 Management Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Increase the rate of progress pupils make in improving their behaviour so that they learn effectively in all lessons and behave with respect and courtesy towards each other and adults by:
  - ensuring attendance to lessons dramatically improves by the end of the summer term 2012
  - ensuring all staff consistently follow school policies in managing behaviour
  - developing ways for pupils to reflect on their own behaviour and identify how they can improve it.
  
- Improve the quality of lessons so that all teaching is mostly good or better by:
  - focusing on what pupils should learn in lessons based on what they already know and their interests
  - ensuring teachers check pupils' progress throughout lessons and adapt their teaching if necessary
  - effectively tackling low literacy skills
  - ensuring managers take decisive action when teaching is inadequate
  - developing the role of the teaching assistants so that they support pupils' learning effectively.
  
- Ensure senior staff use achievement and behaviour data more effectively to direct the work for improvement by:
  - analysing data and using it to accurately inform evaluations
  - checking that achievement data is accurate
  - using the analysis of data to produce perceptive action plans that reflect realistic aspirational targets.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 20–21 February 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with members of the senior leadership team including the interim leader, pupils, the Chair of the Management Committee and two representatives from the local authority. Most of the time was spent observing pupils in class and around the school to check the quality of teaching and learning and the pupils' behaviour and safety.

### **Context**

Since November 2012 the number of pupils has increased from 36 to 41. Two teachers are absent due to long-term health difficulties. Their teaching commitments are being covered by regular temporary staff whose work and planning are closely monitored by the interim school leader from the local authority.

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

Pupils are beginning to make better progress because they have a better attitude to work and attend lessons more frequently. There are more lessons where pupils make reasonable or good progress. This is because teachers are preparing work more carefully for pupils working at different levels of understanding. Primary pupils are making better progress in reading and writing, and their enthusiasm is testament to the improved teaching in these areas. In the literacy lessons observed pupils were keen to read and write words, including those they found difficult, and many used their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to good effect. However, the progress being made by secondary students in literacy is not improving fast enough.

The primary and secondary teachers for mathematics have more precise information about the pupils' understanding than at the previous inspection. This information is being used effectively to make sure pupils learn skills that they have missed out on previously. The work they are given in lessons is more demanding, and this is helping them to make better progress than before.

There are still some lessons across the curriculum where teachers are not helping pupils to achieve as well as they should. Frequently the work in these lessons is not interesting enough and is too easy.

The school is continuing to succeed in helping pupils to return to mainstream schools, and six more have done so since the last monitoring inspection.

## **The quality of teaching**

Teaching remains variable but is improving. Teachers are planning work more effectively using information they have about pupils' skills and understanding. More teachers are providing more demanding work, although this is not consistent across lessons. When teachers offer a good level of challenge, pupils usually rise to it and achieve more. In some lessons the work planned is not sufficiently engaging to capture the pupils' interest, or planned accurately enough to give them opportunities to apply their skills at the right levels. Literacy is not being taught consistently enough across Key Stage 3.

Support staff are better informed about what pupils are learning, and this helps them be more effective. Pupils have more opportunities to try the work on their own before being given help. This was especially effective in a primary mathematics lesson where pupils were investigating weight. Similarly, in a secondary physical education lesson pupils rose to the challenge of working together without adult support to find ways of moving equipment across the gymnasium without touching the floor. At other times, staff still provide too much help too quickly and pupils learn to rely on this to complete their work.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour continues to improve while they attend Oakfield, particularly their attitude to work. New arrivals and pupils preparing to move on sometimes react inappropriately to the uncertainty of change, but more consistent support from staff means that these issues are usually tackled effectively. Most pupils are making at least reasonable progress in learning how to respond in acceptable ways to a variety of situations, as shown by the success of those moving back into mainstream school. Primary and secondary pupils are motivated by the reward systems in place. Staff usually provide a calm and well-structured response to any behaviour issues that arise and help pupils make sensible choices. Staff follow procedures well, and have taken appropriate action in response to specific incidents. More pupils are learning to reflect on their own behaviour and its consequences, although some are not always given the necessary visual or timely support they require to do this effectively.

Support offered by the school has helped more pupils to attend more frequently, but a few are still not attending frequently enough.

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

The current enhanced senior team has sustained reasonable progress in improving the education of pupils attending Oakfield Short Stay School. They have effectively supported staff so that a desire to make things better is more widely shared. The focus on improving teaching has sharpened and the accuracy of feedback given to staff about pupils' learning has improved, but the connection between teaching and

learning is still not always clear enough. Senior leaders have worked alongside teachers to help them improve their teaching by more accurately judging the progress pupils make in lessons. Temporary teachers are also supported well by a member of the senior team. Changes to timetables and the subjects taught are helping to meet the needs of individual pupils more effectively and provide more time for learning. More personalised timetables are beginning to support some of the pupils with the most complex needs in the primary phase, and timetables including alternative provision are well managed and usually successful in the secondary phase.

The tracking of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science continues to improve, but teachers do not use examples of pupils' work consistently to support their judgements. The aspirations teachers have for pupils' learning are not always high enough. Behaviour is monitored thoroughly and analysed in ways which are useful to support improvement. The leadership team have learnt from some difficult situations, and have taken swift additional action to help ensure pupils' safety.

The improvement plan continues to steer developments, but at the same time the management committee, headteacher and interim leader are suitably addressing the possible impact of national changes to funding arrangements. The management committee is providing a good level of support and challenge, but does not always receive enough information to check the effectiveness of actions taken. For example, reports about progress explain what has happened, but not always the impact it has had on pupils' progress and behaviour.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to fund additional leaders and more pupil places than there are pupils attending. This has helped to sustain improvements, particularly in teaching and pupils' behaviour. Effective support for the teaching of reading and writing, including phonics in the primary phase, has led to more consistency and pupils learning more. Local authority representation on the management committee and the task group has also helped to maintain the focus and pace of improvement.