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10 May 2013

Mrs N Kandola  
Headteacher  
Avenue Primary School  
Avenue Road Extension  
Leicester  
LE2 3EJ

Dear Mrs Kandola

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

Following my visit with Andrew Lagden, Additional Inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 May 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 third 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.

Two newly qualified teachers (NQTs) may be appointed for the start of the next school year in September 2013 provided that:

- the headteacher establishes a structured induction policy for new staff
- a member of the senior leadership team takes responsibility for the supervision of NQTs
- each NQT works in partnership with a member of staff who is a good teacher
- the governors and local authority pay close attention to the progress of the NQTs.

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's Services for Leicester.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve teaching and accelerate the progress made by all pupils, but particularly for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 2, by:
  - making effective use of assessment data to set suitably challenging targets and activities for all groups of pupils
  - checking on pupils' learning more frequently during lessons so that activities can be adapted to their individual needs
  - ensuring that teachers' marking clearly shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work and meet their targets
  - ensuring that teaching assistants contribute to pupils' learning in lessons.
  
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including members of the governing body, accurately evaluate and rapidly improve the quality of education pupils receive and their achievement by:
  - urgently improving the systems used to manage and monitor teaching and learning so that more teaching becomes good or better and underachievement is eradicated
  - collating and analysing information about pupils' attainment and progress more effectively so that any underachievement is quickly identified and addressed
  - improving teachers' understanding of pupils' performance data so that they identify the most important areas for improvement and use assessment information confidently to plan the next step in learning for individuals.
  
- Ensure that attendance improves further by carefully monitoring and promoting the attendance of all pupil groups.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 8 – 9 May 2013**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, members of the governing body, groups of pupils, staff, local authority representatives and the headteacher of a local school who provides mentor support.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection two teachers have left the school. An assistant headteacher has been recruited and will commence his appointment in September. Currently, the school is recruiting four teachers to start in September.

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

Improvements in the teaching of reading and writing have resulted in an acceleration of progress across the school. However, the rate of progress is variable because the quality of teaching varies from class to class. In Year 6, pupils make very rapid progress. Since September 2012 in reading, writing and mathematics, they have made the progress that would be expected in two years. Assessment information shows that standards are at the expected level and for some groups, such as the more able, a larger proportion than expected exceed this level. Progress in Key Stage 1 and Year 4 continues to accelerate in reading and writing as teaching strengthens. Assessment information shows that in Year 2, standards have risen and are broadly average. This year, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children made much better progress than in the past in all areas of learning. Progress is slowest in Years 3 and 5. In Year 3 this means that the gap between pupils' standards and what is expected has widened.

Progress in mathematics is generally slower than in reading and writing. One reason is that when teaching different topics, such as subtraction, some teachers do not consider well enough what pupils have learnt in the past so that they can build on their understanding when planning their work. Another reason why progress is slower is that pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to apply their skills or take part in problem-solving activities that stretch them and encourage them to think. For example, work in books shows that in three classes, teachers planned a mix of addition and subtraction problems for pupils to complete. However, they start with all the addition problems which are easier, and pupils did not have sufficient time to move on to the harder subtraction problems which they never completed.

The quality of teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language is strengthening. School leaders have improved the quality of additional activities for these pupils and are paying much closer attention to the quality of teaching and the progress these

pupils make. This has resulted in faster progress for pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly in Key Stage 1. The impact is less evident on the progress over time of some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

### **The quality of teaching**

Concerted efforts by the school through strategies such as paired coaching arrangements have been successful in improving teaching in a number of classes, in particular in Year 2 where teaching is now regularly good. It has also been successful at improving teaching in Year 3 where this is urgently required. Teaching is stronger because of effective training since January. However, this is not yet reflected in the school assessment information. There are weaknesses in teaching in Year 5 that have yet to be rectified. This weakness has the potential to undermine the faster progress pupils are now making in Year 4. In Year 6, teaching varies between good and outstanding. School leaders understand the importance of sharing this good practice and plans are in place for Year 6 teachers to work in the first instance with Year 5 teachers.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage varies from requires improvement to good. The rate of improvement reported at the last monitoring inspection and at the last local authority review in March has slowed. One reason for this is that the external support offered by the local authority has been withdrawn as teaching was judged to be much stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Since then the responsible school leaders have not maintained the previous rapid rate of improvement.

All teachers have a better understanding of assessment information and meet regularly with school leaders to analyse the progress of pupils. Some are not yet as good as they need to be at using the information about pupils to plan work that is sufficiently challenging. In the lessons where this occurs, pupils are all doing the same work which is not hard enough for some of them.

In the majority of classes teachers adhere to the school marking policy and there are some classes where marking is very helpful. However, the quality of this marking is variable. This is particularly the case in mathematics where teachers do not address misunderstanding and mistakes with the helpful advice pupils need to move on. Pupils have targets that they are trying to achieve. Teachers do not give pupils enough advice on the steps they need to take to reach these targets.

Teaching assistants are much more effective as a result of the training they receive and the performance management procedures that have been established for them. They are making an important contribution to the learning of different groups such as pupils that speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school

meals. For many of these pupils, the additional activities provided that are led by teaching assistants are helping to narrow the gap between their standards and what is expected nationally.

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

A strength of teaching that is consistent across the school is that teachers foster a positive attitude to learning amongst nearly all pupils. In all lessons, pupils try their best and work cooperatively with each other. Pupils behave sensibly around the school. Pupils spoken to report that they think behaviour and its management have improved in the last year.

Attendance has continued to rise and is currently above average. This is no longer an aspect that causes concern.

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

There are a significant proportion of teachers on temporary contracts and staff who are returning to work having taken time off for understandable personal reasons. This has been very challenging for school leaders. They have ensured that teaching does not slip back in these classes and it has improved steadily since the last monitoring inspection.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have now overcome the major barriers that needed to be removed so that the school can embark on sustained improvement. They have established management procedures to check the progress of pupils, the quality of teaching and to train teachers. They have a school improvement plan that covers all the necessary priorities for improvement. These procedures are not yet as well coordinated as they could be to focus the school on their most important priorities. For example, one priority is that all teaching should be good. While this is correct, it is not specific about those year groups where the most work needs to be done to achieve this. The timetable to check the quality of teaching ensures regular monitoring of lessons, but does not focus sharply enough on the teachers that require the most improvement. In turn procedures to train and improve teaching have been successful for some, but they are not as closely linked to the school improvement plan so that governors and leaders can judge the effectiveness of this work against the priority to improve teaching.

Senior leaders are now supported by subject and phase leaders who are becoming increasingly confident and successful in their roles. They have not yet reached the point where they can lead without support from senior leaders or from external partners. For example, some of the variation in teaching is a result of leaders who have yet to learn how to challenge and support teachers with enough effect to make sure that they comply with the school policy on what constitutes good teaching.

Governors are effective and demonstrate a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and understand how to address them. They are conscientious in reflecting on the quality of their own work in order to strengthen their role. They are taking a much more strategic approach to their work, for example, they understand how crucial it is for the school to have very effective induction procedures for the new and returning staff in September and are working with the headteacher to make induction a success.

### **External support**

The school continues to benefit from the support from local authority advisers and consultants. The removal of support from the Early Years Foundation Stage was a necessary step to judge whether there was sufficient leadership capacity for the unit to continue its development unaided. School leaders and the local authority appreciate that this needs to be regularly checked. The partnership with a local school has been particularly helpful in sharing good practice with teachers and new leaders and in strengthening management procedures.