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Ms Caroline Kiely  
Executive headteacher  
Whitmore Park Primary School  
Halford Lane  
Coventry  
CV6 2HG

Dear Ms Kiely

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Whitmore Park Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 20 June 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, a group of pupils, the school's external consultant, the assistant headteacher of the partner school, the learning mentor, the school's two deputy headteachers, a representative of the local authority, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated.

### **Context**

Following the resignation of the previous headteacher, you have led and managed the school as executive headteacher. A new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body have recently been appointed.

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

You have brought to the work of the school much-needed direction, purpose and sense of urgency. You and the local authority have drawn up detailed plans for improvement and you have already taken decisive action. You quickly established a clear vision for the future based upon high pupils' achievement and outstanding teaching. Pupils and staff are already noticing how the changes you have made are having a positive impact, especially on improving pupils' learning in lessons. There is also evidence in some of the pupils' books that progress is beginning to accelerate, especially in writing. Links with the partner school have provided your staff with opportunities to improve their teaching and leadership skills. The work in literacy, led by the assistant headteacher of the support school, is particularly impressive and its impact was clearly evident in the literacy lessons observed during the inspection. A significant feature of these lessons was that teachers' planning gave details of pupils' activities but, more importantly, had a clear focus on what pupils of all levels of attainment were expected to learn. This emphasis on learning was acutely obvious in lessons. Teachers made sure that all pupils knew exactly what the learning intentions were, regularly reminded them of these, and kept them firmly focused on their learning and not just on their task.

Staff say that, due to the work undertaken by the external consultant, they have a much better understanding of how to engage pupils' attention in lessons and make lessons more interesting. Again, the positive impact of this training was seen in the lessons observed, with a variety of 'active learning' strategies being used by teachers. Pupils say that lessons are now more enjoyable mainly because they are more involved and do not sit and listen to the teacher for too long. Your monitoring, together with that of other leaders and the external consultant, shows that teaching is already improving. There is some good and outstanding teaching in the school but, as you are aware, there is still too much teaching that requires improvement, and a small amount that is inadequate. The support plans you have established for individual teachers must quickly have a positive impact so that all pupils get the consistently good teaching to which they are entitled.

A new marking policy is ensuring that teachers now give good quality feedback to pupils and they are given opportunities to learn from their mistakes. The school's own monitoring shows that the vast majority of marking is now in line with school policy, and this was confirmed through looking at samples of books during the inspection.

The plans for overall school improvement cover all the areas that need to be addressed. They correctly include regular milestone checks so that you, the governing body and the local authority can be sure that the school is on course to be

removed from special measures within the desired time-scale. Your attendance data show that attendance is likely to be well below average by the end of the school year. You are aware of this and have already talked with the learning mentor about strategies to ensure that all pupils attend regularly. Your improvement plans should be amended to reflect this additional priority.

In the past, subject leaders and senior leaders have not been fully involved in supporting teachers and evaluating the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility. You have already started to develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of all the leaders. Their increased knowledge and understanding of their roles are reflected in the greater contributions they are making to checking on, for example, how effectively teachers are using the new planning formats.

The newly appointed Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body are committed to the school and determined that it should improve. They understand the urgency of ensuring that all teaching is consistently good, and that all leaders and managers develop the skills to make sure that pupils achieve well and standards rise. The review of the skills of the governing body has started. Governors are making more visits to the school and some have started to improve their skills by, for example, attending a meeting of the governors at the partner school.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection without the prior agreement of HMI.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**