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4 July 2013

Mrs Libby Banks  
Redhill Primary School  
Wrights Avenue  
West Chadsmoor  
Cannock  
WS11 5JR

Dear Mrs Banks

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

Following my visit with Christine Bray, Additional Inspector, to your school on 2–3 July 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 November 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 not making enough 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 Commissioner for Learning and Skills, Staffordshire local authority name and as below.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils by ensuring that:
  - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve and use what they already know about pupils to set demanding work
  - teachers advise pupils on how to make good progress in lessons
  - teachers tell pupils what to do to improve, and make sure pupils act on this advice, when marking work
  - teachers check pupils understanding throughout lessons and correct any misunderstandings straight away
  - support staff are used effectively in class to support pupils' learning
  - topics interest boys as well as girls and give all groups of pupils opportunities to develop their ability to work on their own without help from the teacher
  - pupils have more opportunities to practise reading and writing across all subjects.
  
- Improve the behaviour of pupils and reduce the number of exclusions by:
  - using the school's behaviour policy consistently
  - giving pupils interesting and relevant activities in lessons so that they want to learn
  - providing planned opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding in lessons.
  
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - making sure that senior and other leaders implement the headteacher's vision for the school
  - ensuring that teachers with leadership responsibilities understand how data can be used to identify where there are weaknesses in provision and take action to help colleagues improve their teaching
  - checking regularly that actions taken are having the expected impact on how well pupils are doing
  - holding staff to account for increasing rates of pupils' progress over time through rigorous management of teachers' performance.
  
- Ensure that the governing body checks:
  - whether the pupil premium funding is used effectively to make a difference to raising standards for eligible pupils
  - how well the performance of teachers is managed and linked to their salary progression.

## Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2–3 July 2013

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the seconded deputy headteacher, a group of pupils, the Chair and several members of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.

### Context

The substantive deputy headteacher has recently returned to work following sickness leave since May half term. In her absence, the headteacher has been teaching the Year 5 class full time. A seconded deputy headteacher has been supporting the headteacher and teaching but will take up her own headship in September. The day before this inspection, an additional seconded deputy headteacher joined the school on a temporary basis to boost the teaching in upper Key Stage 2 and to support the phased reintroduction of the substantive deputy headteacher. Four newly qualified teachers are currently employed at the school: one has completed her probationary year; two will complete it in the autumn term and one is employed on a supply contract. A combination of inexperienced and temporary teachers, job shares and staff on phased returns from long-term sickness means that staffing is unstable.

On the first day of this inspection, half of Year 6 pupils were out of school visiting their chosen secondary schools. On the second day of the inspection, all of Year 6 pupils were out.

### Achievement of pupils at the school

Achievement remains inadequate. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 remain low.

Standards in reading are improving but remain very low in Years 5 and 6 and in pockets elsewhere. The school's drive to tackle the deficits in pupils' reading skills identified at the first monitoring inspection is bearing fruit. There is now a clear system for checking pupils' progress in reading and guiding them to the correct level and choice of books. The school's most recent data are illuminating: they show that some pupils have reading ages in excess of, and well in excess of, their birthday ages and so are potential high flyers, capable of achieving well. However, the work they are given in lessons does not match their ability or potential and they make too little progress in too many lessons. Significant numbers of pupils have made more than twelve months progress in their reading ages over a three-month period but for others, their reading progress has stalled or declined. Pupils are making more

progress through the new school reading programme and home reading than through the daily guided reading sessions.

Pupils' attitudes to reading are improving. They are reading many more books; they say they enjoy reading and they report that they 'know they are getting better'. Inspectors observed pupils reading quietly, changing books or talking to others about the books they were reading. All pupils spoken to had their reading books, reading bags and reading diaries with them; clear evidence that the school's reading routine is becoming established.

Across the school, standards in writing are low. Pupils' presentation of their work, spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting are all weak. In too many books, opportunities for pupils to write at length are limited by having to complete worksheets. Few pupils in Key Stage 2 use joined handwriting script or a pen. There are, though, recent examples of well-ordered, extended writing in Years 5 and 6 in classes taught by the headteacher and seconded deputy headteacher.

Standards in mathematics remain low, although the predicted results for the end of Key Stage 2 national tests are higher than for reading and writing. The school has identified that pupils have a better grasp and understanding of shape, space and measures than they do of number and calculation. Inspectors observed weaknesses in pupils' understanding of place value and in knowing what basic terms, such as 'units', mean. Pupils' understanding of the base-ten number system is hampered because of the school's lack of a coherent policy for teaching place value and the choice of resources. Few pupils are required to work independently from textbooks, so they rely constantly on the class teacher feeding them worksheets or activities.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching remains inadequate. The lack of whole-school 'non-negotiable' expectations is impeding the quality of teaching. Inexperienced teachers do not have a clear picture of what good or better teaching looks like and, apart from in reading, there are no policies for how to teach specifics such as writing or place value, or for how pupils are expected to present their work.

There are few examples of direct, good modelling of specific skills by class teachers. In addition, teachers do not always use the appropriate resource on the right occasion. For the teaching of writing, for example, in Key Stage 1, inspectors observed, in an otherwise effective lesson, a teacher using pupils' ideas to generate sentences but these were typed up on a laptop and pupils saw them appear on the large, interactive screen perfectly formed. Pupils did not see the teacher lay out a page, use a ruler, write the date and compose manually. They did not see the teacher display good handwriting skills. In these instances, it would have been more beneficial for the pupils had the teacher written on a flip chart or on a board. In contrast, on occasions when the use of the interactive whiteboard would have

enhanced the teaching, for example, through the use of relevant mathematics software, the technology was not used to best effect.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children have limited writing tools and those that they do have are not always appropriate for their age. They have pencils and crayons which are too thin and too small for their hands, and they do not have a wide enough range of writing and mark-making tools.

The quality of teachers' own writing on boards, in exercise books and on displays is highly variable. There is no consistent model for how teachers should write. The unspoken message to pupils is that lack of care in presentation is acceptable.

Despite lessons being planned for different groups, in most of those observed the match of work to pupils' needs and abilities was generally weak. In too many lessons, a small number of pupils dominate and other pupils do not get asked to contribute. Teachers do not routinely use the range of strategies seen elsewhere to ensure that all children in the class participate fully. Teachers' questioning is limited; they ask too few open questions and so pupils are not required to give extended answers.

The half-hourly, daily guided reading sessions, which total up to more than 10% of the school's weekly teaching time, are not used to best effect and pupils make limited progress in them. For example, in a daily 30-minute session, whilst two groups read with an adult, the others undertake activities which include reading for a short period of time and then completing a low-level writing task. Instead, they could be reading silently and, over the course of the week, read a full book.

The class timetables are not monitored and the timings of the school week appear to be too short to meet the requirement of the National Curriculum. Given the timings for some subjects on individual class timetables, it is not clear how the programme of study for mathematics, for example, is covered nor how the school ensures a broad and balanced curriculum.

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

Attendance has declined for all groups: all pupils, boys, girls, and those known to be eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium. The school is not meeting its own attendance targets. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have the lowest attendance of all groups: currently 91.7% for the year since September, down from 93.1% for the corresponding period last year. There is no discernible improvement in the persistent absence figures. Systems to monitor attendance are weak: data are gathered and some actions taken but with no evident impact. There is no analysis or evaluation of actions taken or the data collected.

Exclusions remain unacceptably high and show no signs of reducing. There is no clear strategy by senior leaders or governors to manage the exclusions. Some pupils have repeated exclusions for the same apparent misdemeanour but there is no evidence that the use of exclusion has been reviewed.

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

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the headteacher has introduced a comprehensive system for teaching reading across the school which is having a significantly positive impact. She has taken up opportunities to visit schools with good practice, brought back good ideas and begun to implement them. She has also rewritten the school's action plan so that it is more focused and clearer. However, her ability to fulfil her leadership role has been severely limited by the weaknesses in the senior leadership team and by having to teach full time. She is unable to delegate and carries a very heavy workload. It is imperative that a clear and sustainable leadership structure be established as soon as possible.

Governance remains inadequate. The new appointments to the governing body are welcome but they have not had time to demonstrate challenge and support to the school. The new appointments include members of the Trust partnership and personnel with school improvement and human resources expertise. Governors have been reluctant to tackle long-standing weaknesses in teaching, particularly at senior level. They have not been challenging enough about the high rates of exclusions and low attendance and instead appear to accept a culture of low aspirations for pupils at the school.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided good, practical support for the newly qualified teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In contrast, the Trust partnership has had very little impact on the quality of teaching and standards to date.