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4 October 2013

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 with Shahnaz Maqsood, Additional Inspector, to your school on 2–3 October 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 2013. 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.

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

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. 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.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers  
**Her Majesty’s Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2013

- Improve the teaching that requires improvement or is inadequate to good by:
  - making sure teachers plan lessons that are more challenging for all groups of pupils
  - giving pupils more time to complete their work by reducing the time teachers spend talking
  - making the lessons in all subjects much more interesting
  - raising the teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve in lessons
  - ensuring that teachers take full responsibility for the deployment of other adults in their lessons.
  
- Raise standards in English and mathematics to at least average by:
  - accelerating the progress made in lessons by all groups and particularly the most able pupils
  - using the pupil premium funding to help raise the standards of those pupils for whom it is intended
  - making sure that the quality of teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs does not vary widely from year to year.
  
- Strengthen the leadership and the governors' ability to fulfil their responsibilities by:
  - ensuring that the headteacher and senior leaders take a determined approach to driving improvement and do not hold back tackling weak practice
  - making sure that teachers are rewarded appropriately for their teaching
  - ensuring that new leaders have the skills necessary and support of senior leaders to fulfil their responsibilities
  - undertaking a review of the work of the governing body and taking action to strengthen governors' ability to take a strategic overview of school improvement and to challenge school leaders.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2–3 October 2013**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, other leaders from this school and the support school, the attendance officer, pupils, parents, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, five teachers have left the school. The teaching commitments of these teachers are now covered by the school's two deputy headteachers, reorganisation of the teaching staff, and the employment of four temporary teachers.

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

While the rate of progress is still variable across classes and subjects, there continues to be a picture of improving achievement for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are supported by pupil premium funding. Although this is mainly due to better teaching in lessons, it is helped by one-to-one and small-group support. The recent introduction of two additional small classes in Key Stage 2 is providing highly stimulating and motivating learning environments for carefully selected lower-attaining pupils. Improved analysis and use of the school's assessment information are enabling leaders to identify those pupils who are underachieving and make sure that they get additional help as soon as possible.

Despite these improvements, attainment remains below average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and in most year groups. Although standards in writing are lower than reading and mathematics, pupils' writing progress is accelerating sharply due to the additional emphasis that the school is placing on improving pupils' writing skills. Because of previous inadequate provision, some pupils are lacking some basic literacy and numeracy skills, such as correct letter formation, rapid recall of number facts and simple mathematical computation.

### **The quality of teaching**

Improvements identified during the last monitoring inspection have been consolidated and built upon. Although inadequate teaching has not yet been totally eradicated, the school's monitoring records and the inspectors' observations show that there is now more good teaching and some that is outstanding. A new format for planning lessons highlights the attainment levels for different ability groups and helps teachers ensure that the work they give to individual pupils is demanding but

not too hard. Pupils' progress review meetings between teachers and the executive headteacher provide good opportunities for staff to check assessment information and identify which pupils need more help and support. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised and, as a result, pupils are developing higher expectations of themselves. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive. Effective use of praise encourages pupils to want to achieve and builds their confidence.

Where teaching is less than good, it is usually because teachers give work to pupils that is not sufficiently challenging, especially for the more able. In some lessons, the pace of learning is slow because the teacher allows the pupils to spend too much time on one activity before moving on to the next. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and a few pupils become restless and inattentive. Because the school has correctly focused on improving teaching in mathematics and English, teaching in some subjects, such as history and geography, is less effective. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is now more consistently good, often with clear advice on how pupils can improve their work and meet their next target.

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

In lessons, pupils are polite and work together well. As teaching has improved and teachers have higher expectations, pupils are taking increasing responsibility for their learning. When given the opportunity, nearly all pupils willingly and sensibly work together, often giving advice and guidance to each other. Those pupils spoken to said that they feel very safe in school and enjoy good friendships with no fear of intimidating behaviour. The work undertaken by the attendance officer is beginning to raise parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of coming to school regularly. However, this has not yet had any impact on improving attendance.

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

The executive headteacher continues to provide strong, ambitious and very effective leadership. She is transforming the school into one which has a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement. She identifies weaknesses quickly, addresses them effectively and is taking urgent steps to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school. She is supported very well by other leaders from her own school who work with this school's teachers and leaders to improve their skills. As a result, teaching has improved, and the confidence and skills of the school's own leaders have grown significantly. Responsibility for school improvement is now being shared, as leaders build their skills of monitoring and evaluating all aspects of their areas of responsibility. The school's own leaders are aware that they need to continue to develop their skills of observing lessons so that they can give accurate advice to teachers on how they can improve their teaching.

All leaders are now using assessment information much more effectively to identify any underachievement and to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. This information is used well by senior leaders to set targets for teachers and ensure that their pay progression and promotion are clearly linked to performance.

The representatives of the governing body report that the quality of the information they get from the executive headteacher is good. It is giving them a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and what still needs to be improved. The governing body has undertaken an external review of its effectiveness and is working to improve the skills of the governors through training programmes and support from the local authority. Governors' improved understanding of the school assessment data mean that they are much more effectively holding the school's leaders to account for raising achievement.

### **External support**

The work undertaken by the executive headteacher, the staff of her school and external consultants has been pivotal in improving teaching and strengthening leadership. Teachers from the local secondary school have worked effectively with selected Year 6 pupils to help raise their achievement. The executive headteacher and governors report that the local authority has continued to support them very well, especially through offering advice and providing training.

**PROTECT-INSPECTION**

