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6 November 2013

Mrs J Robinson and Mr D Parker  
Acting Headteachers  
Skipton, Ings Community Primary and Nursery School  
Broughton Road  
Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 1TE

Dear Mrs Robinson and Mr Parker

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Skipton, Ings Community Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit with Lee Owston Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 5 November 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 July 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

The permanent headteacher was absent during the recent inspection and subsequently resigned at the end of the summer term 2013. The local authority arranged for two headteachers, one from a North Yorkshire teaching school and the other an associate school to oversee the running of the school during the inspection. The governing body in conjunction with the local authority decided not to proceed with the appointment of a new headteacher. This was due to uncertainty over the future of the school. The local authority is currently considering a range of options including: applying for academy status; another local school becoming responsible for the site; amalgamation with a neighbouring school; maintaining the school as it is; or seeking closure. In the meantime, the two interim headteachers continue to have joint responsibility for managing the school on a day-to-day basis while also taking appropriate action to secure improvement.

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

The current leadership team has used its collective skills and experience to good effect in the short period following the previous inspection. School leaders have responded quickly in addressing the areas identified for improvement. Between them they have a good understanding of what needs to be done in order to improve teaching and raise achievement. The learning environment is stimulating, a common lesson planning format has been introduced, teachers are developing their ability to meet the needs of all pupils and a marking policy has been introduced across the school. These are significant steps forward but much remains to be done. Most importantly, leaders have helped to foster positive relationships between staff and this is helping to develop a sense of teamwork that will be instrumental if improvements are to be realised.

However, if the school is to improve rapidly all teachers and teaching assistants will require support and focused professional development, particularly in relation to improving classroom practice. Furthermore, school leaders need to be ever present as they drive up expectations and check the quality of teaching and learning on a regular and frequent basis. The current leadership model does not facilitate this approach. The total amount of time that the two acting headteachers spend in school equates to two days a week. This is not good enough. It means that the school lacks effective leadership for the majority of the time that pupils are present. As a result, there is no guarantee that improved standards of teaching and learning will become a consistent feature of this school. If pupils' achievement is to rise, good constant leadership is essential. Swift action needs to be taken by the local authority to secure a permanent leadership presence at the school. The local authority acknowledges that this is a priority and intends to give the matter urgent consideration.

The current leadership is ensuring that the governing body is better informed about the work of the school. However, the governing body lacks the requisite skills and experience necessary to monitor the work of the school effectively. This is about to be compounded with the resignation of three governors with immediate effect. The local authority recognises the need for a strong governing body and is in the process of appointing an interim executive board. This is both timely and welcome.

The local authority did not respond to the needs of the school quickly enough prior to the previous inspection. However, it is clear from the statement of action and the manner in which they have responded to issues relating to leadership and governance that they are providing better and more appropriate support for the school.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's 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.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler

**Her Majesty's Inspector**