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21 November 2013

Mrs Emma Ford  
Headteacher  
Clarendon Road Community Primary School  
Clarendon Road  
Eccles  
Manchester  
M30 9BJ

Dear Mrs Ford

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Clarendon Road Community Primary School**

Following my visit with Jennifer Platt, Additional Inspector, to your school on 19 and 20 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 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.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 Interim Executive Board and the Strategic Director for Children's Services for Salford.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring teachers have sufficiently high expectations of all pupils
  - making sure that pupils apply their mathematical skills and knowledge consistently well to solve problems
  - providing more opportunities for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 to write meaningfully and at length
  - ensuring that the curriculum provides the broad and stimulating range of opportunities required to fully meet the needs of all groups of pupils, but especially boys.
  
- Improve teaching so that lessons are at least good, by:
  - improving lesson planning so that pupils have more opportunities to engage actively in learning and independent work
  - improving the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) so that pupils have a secure grounding in the basic skills needed to learn to read
  - evaluating the progress of individuals and groups more accurately and amending teaching plans accordingly
  - ensuring all teaching is of a brisk pace and challenges and fully engages pupils, hence eradicating any low-level misbehaviour in lessons.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including headteacher, senior leadership team and governance, so that it drives the school forward with the necessary pace and sense of purpose by:
  - evaluating the effectiveness of the school accurately and using the results as the basis for tackling weaknesses
  - ensuring that accurate information on pupils' performance is used to inform whole-school planning, teachers' planning and their professional development, and spending priorities
  - ensuring the quality of teaching is monitored thoroughly and the results are used well to improve its quality and impact on pupils' achievement
  - ensuring whole school targets are challenging and are used in performance management to hold staff closely to account for pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that the pupil premium is used wisely and makes a difference to pupils' progress in learning
  - taking firm action to ensure all weaknesses are tackled and all school staff are given appropriate support so that they can manage their areas of responsibility effectively ensuring that the governing body fully understands the school's strengths and areas for improvement and that it holds leaders and managers to account.

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 19 to 20 November 2013.**

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, inspectors observed the school's work. Together with the headteacher, I observed teaching and learning in all of the classes in the school and scrutinised a samples of work in pupils' English and mathematics books as well as talking to groups of pupils and listening to some of them read. I held telephone conversations with the chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority. I also scrutinised a range of documentation relating to the work of the school.

### **Context**

A new substantive headteacher was appointed in September 2013, who has had experience of leading a school out of special measures. A leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, a Year 2 teacher and a Year 6 teacher also joined the staff in September. The former head of school was appointed deputy headteacher at the end of October 2013 and an assistant headteacher has been appointed and will start in January 2014. Two supply teachers and the deputy headteacher are covering long-term absences in the Nursery, Year 1 and Year 3. At the time of the inspection, nearly half of the teaching assistants were absent and a significant number of supply teaching assistants were working in the school. The IEB is still in discussion with the Department for Education about the arrangements for the school becoming an academy.

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

There have been improvements in pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, across the school there is still underperformance in writing. There are improvements in pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) which are the result of a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics. However, weaknesses in Year 1 teaching last year have meant that in September, pupils began Year 2 with low attainment in writing. Improvement in pupils' phonics knowledge has not had an impact on their writing. This is because the links between different aspects of English are not planned carefully to enable phonic knowledge and skills to support better progress in writing.

Standards in mathematics and reading are improving and more pupils are achieving expected levels. However, pupils' better progress is still hampered by work that is not matched to their different needs. The school's own assessment information shows that gaps between boys and girls, and between pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and their peers, are beginning to close in some year groups. However, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs continue to underperform. Too often in lessons, their needs are not precisely met and the work they are given to complete does not enable them to make effective progress. Similarly, these pupils frequently work with teaching assistants who do not enable them to develop their independence, identify and correct errors and misunderstandings or challenge them to achieve as much as they can.

In the Nursery, greater security is needed in teachers' assessments of what children can do, particularly when they start school. Leaders need to ensure that inaccurate assessments that are too low do not lead to low expectations of children. Inspectors observed Nursery

children who were clearly at typical levels for their age who had been assessed as working below expected levels. From these typical starting points, fewer children than might be expected left the Reception classes at expected levels of development at the end of the summer term 2013. The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has identified the correct priorities in her improvement plans and realises there is still much to do to improve outcomes for children.

### **The quality of teaching**

The teaching of mathematics is improving and there is some good practice emerging, particularly in Year 2. Teachers set practical tasks and pose different questions which help deepen pupils' learning. Marking frequently identifies further calculations for pupils to try but does not analyse pupils' work in enough detail. There remain inconsistencies across the school and teachers' lack of subject knowledge is evident because they introduce misconceptions through their teaching, which show in pupils' work and are not picked up by teachers. For example, in one pupil's work he had misunderstood the use of '<' and '>' symbols when applied to negative numbers. Even though the pupil's response to the teacher's feedback clearly indicated they had misunderstood, the teacher did not follow this up.

The school is aware of weaknesses in pupils' writing. The new headteacher has introduced a new cursive handwriting script which has led to improvements in handwriting, particularly in Key Stage 2. Classroom displays contain helpful examples of different styles of writing which help pupils to understand the kind of writing they are expected to produce. As in mathematics, teachers are marking work conscientiously and there are improvements to the feedback pupils are getting. However, teachers' comments need to improve further to help pupils make better progress. Too often, points for improvement do not build pupils' understanding and, where pupils correct or redraft work, errors in these corrections are not picked up or used to inform teachers' planning of subsequent learning. In Key Stage 1, inspectors saw examples of links to other subjects which hampered pupils' progress rather than supporting improvement or providing an interesting context for writing within literacy lessons.

The effectiveness of teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is still weak. Too often these pupils are being given inappropriate work which is not matched to their needs. The support they receive, though well meaning, does not help their understanding and enable them to make better progress. Consequently, these pupils are underachieving.

In the Nursery and Reception classes, work to refurbish the classroom and access to the outside area has finished. However, improvements to the way children and adults make use of the outside area are yet to commence in earnest. In the Nursery, adults plan activities which limit learning to very simple skills rather than extending and developing language and understanding. These activities are led or directed by adults and too often opportunities for children to explore and create and follow learning they initiate themselves are not taken. The role of the adult is underdeveloped and frequently adults talk too much and do not allow time to listen to and assess the responses of children.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour in lessons continues to be a positive feature of learning. They cooperate well and make better progress in lessons where they are given opportunities to be independent and think more deeply about their work. However, this independence is often limited by additional adults who sometimes hamper pupils' engagement by doing too much for them.

Infrequent incidents of racist or other inappropriate language are carefully logged and followed up. Where issues of child protection or safeguarding are identified, these too are promptly followed up and appropriate systems followed and child protection services informed.

Pupils' attendance is monitored weekly and figures for the autumn term are showing some improvement. This is the result of action taken by the school to talk to parents and encourage better attendance. However, the attendance of groups identified at the previous inspection continues to be lower than that of the majority.

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

The new headteacher and senior leaders have updated action plans which address the correct priorities in the school. However, these plans do not currently set out what success will look like along the journey through key milestones. Consequently, the IEB's ability to hold leaders to account at interim stages of the plan and to the school's progress is limited.

Middle leaders have carried out a useful range of monitoring which confirm the issues raised in the last report. However, monitoring still focuses too heavily on the implementation of systems and initiatives and more urgent action to rectify these issues and follow up robustly has not moved as swiftly as governors and leaders would have liked. They all accept it is time to ensure there is a greater focus on the impact these initiatives are having and the quality of learning and the progress pupils are making rather than checking that initiatives are simply happening.

The school's data have highlighted the limited achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs. There has been inadequate leadership in this area and far too little accountability for the progress of these pupils. As a result, these pupils continue to underachieve and fall further behind.

There are appropriate plans in place to manage the performance of teachers. Improvement objectives in these plans tend to be too general and are not specific about the progress of groups of pupils. Nevertheless, following lesson observations and discussions with the headteacher, teachers now have individual plans in place with clear identification of areas for improvement and times scales for these improvements to be made. Leaders are challenging the weakest teaching and using appropriate systems to manage underperformance. However, there is still further to go to ensure all weak teaching is firmly in the past.

The headteacher, the Chair of the IEB and the local authority all agree that progress has slowed since the last inspection and that things are not improving as quickly as they would have liked. The pace of improvement has been affected by a number of factors including staff issues. The Chair of the IEB stated that there was frustration among the IEB that time

spent on discussions about the school's transition to academy status was detracting from a focus on school improvement. IEB minutes confirm that a significant amount of meetings have been focused on this issue. However, they also show that, although leaders report to the IEB, there is little record of the challenge brought and accountability of leaders for the progress of pupils.

### **External support**

The support from local authority and external consultants has enabled the school to get a clear grasp of its present strengths and weaknesses and bring about some improvements. Training and support for the mathematics leader has resulted in some stronger practice emerging in the school, but there is still more work needed to ensure greater consistency in teachers' subject knowledge and feedback to pupils. Key to making the most of the support the school receives is the extent to which leaders follow up on the issues identified and ensure improvements are consistently embedded in teachers' practice and have the necessary impact.