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1 April 2014

Mrs S May  
Headteacher  
Packmoor Primary School  
Carr Street  
Packmoor  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST7 4SP

Dear Mrs May

**Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Packmoor Primary School,  
Stoke-on-Trent**

Following my visit to your school on 31 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in September 2013. 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 the serious weaknesses designation.

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 Stoke-on-Trent.

Yours sincerely

Sue Barkway  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Rapidly improve teaching so that it is good or better by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and setting pupils more challenging targets
  - improving teachers' use of assessments of pupils' work to check each pupils' level of understanding and to provide future work closely matched to their needs, particularly to challenge the most able and ensure middle-ability pupils do not fall behind
  - improving the quality of teachers' questioning in order to check and develop pupils' knowledge of key words, to encourage pupils to explain their understanding and to deepen their understanding of what they are learning
  - ensuring that all teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to check and improve their work in response to teachers' comments in marking.
  
- Raise the attainment of pupils so that they reach their potential and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, and particularly in Key Stage 1 by:
  - ensuring that pupils are always given reading books that are appropriate for their ability, particularly for those who struggle with their reading
  - making sure that adults check carefully that pupils understand what they are reading
  - making sure teachers use evidence of all pupils' previous written work, including their handwriting and spelling, to plan future lessons and make sure that pupils learn from any mistakes
  - improving the teaching of sounds that letters make so that pupils' understanding improves, particularly in Key Stage 1
  - developing pupils' knowledge of key mathematical vocabulary so that they are able to use it confidently when describing how to solve problems.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
  - ensuring that the systems for checking and improving the quality of teaching are rigorously applied so as to speed up pupils' progress
  - continuing to check that staff training is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 31 March 2014**

### **Evidence**

The monitoring inspection focused on progress made with the areas for improvement identified at the previous section 5 inspection.

During the monitoring inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector visited nine parts of lessons, all of which were joint lesson observations with the headteacher. Work in pupils' books was scrutinised. In addition, she visited sessions for the teaching of letters and sounds in Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspector reviewed school documentation, including external monitoring reviews of the quality of teaching, evaluation of progress against the milestones identified in the school improvement plan and data on pupils' progress. She also looked carefully at the school's central record of checks on staff.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, one teacher and a teaching assistant have joined the school. Two members of the teaching staff are on maternity leave currently. There have been no other significant changes.

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

Leaders and managers have a very clear understanding of what needs to be done and have worked with enthusiasm to drive school improvements. A well-planned programme of training and support, combined with rigorous procedures for managing the performance of teaching staff, is rapidly improving the quality of teaching and learning. Most teaching is now consistently good over time and a significant proportion is outstanding. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. In most cases, assessment information is used well to set work that is pitched at the right level for all groups of pupils. As a result, the progress made by pupils currently in the school is accelerating. Predictions for end of Key Stage assessments indicate an improving trend. For example, a greater proportion of pupils, than previously, are working at or above age-related expectations. Almost all pupils are making expected or more than expected progress from their starting points.

The school has successfully improved the quality of marking of pupils' work. Books are marked regularly and teachers identify consistently what pupils have done well and what they can do to improve their work further. Pupils respond well to the marking by correcting or up-levering their work, for example, by writing a more complex sentence or using more interesting vocabulary. As a result, pupils have a better understanding of how to check, correct and improve their own work. However, as yet, there is less opportunity for pupils to respond to marking in

mathematics books and, although recently improved, marking of cross-curricular work is not as effective as that in literacy books.

Members of the recently reconstituted governing body have the skills and experiences necessary to provide a high level of challenge and support to the school. Appropriate training has ensured that all governors have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities, as well as a detailed knowledge of how to analyse data on pupils' progress. They are holding the school increasingly to account through, for example, the challenging questions they ask and their involvement in monitoring the work of the school.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The school uses data well to track and monitor the progress of pupils. As a result, senior leaders have a very good understanding of which pupils are not making expected progress and of the impact of interventions to help them.
- Rigorous systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and to ensure that training and support continues to improve the proportion of teaching which is good or better.
- A revised programme for the teaching of letters and sounds is ensuring that pupils are making better progress in reading than at the inspection in 2013.
- The school sets high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work.
- Classroom and corridor displays are of high quality and teachers use them well to celebrate achievements of pupils, as well as providing stimulation for further learning.
- Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils are attentive in lessons, move around the school in a calm and orderly manner and are polite to adults and each other.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- In Key Stage 1, opportunities for assessment of pupils' learning in mathematics are not being used as effectively as in Key Stage 2 to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic numeracy skills.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided a good level of support to the school. Regular monitoring by the local authority has ensured an accurate view of the progress made by the school and helped to identify next steps for action. The on-going collaboration with teaching schools has also been beneficial, for example, in providing opportunities for training and support and on-going challenge to senior leaders. The local authority has also provided additional funding which has enabled the school to provide further training and professional development for staff.