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10 July 2014

Miss Nawal Mirza  
Executive Headteacher  
Deepdale Junior School  
St Stephens Road  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 6TD

Dear Miss Mirza

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Deepdale Junior School**

Following my visit to Deepdale Junior School on 8 and 9 July 2014, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 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 any more newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection without consultation.

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 Interim Executive Director for Children & Young People for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve matching learning tasks to the needs of different pupils more precisely, including setting harder work for the most able pupils
  - ensuring that all pupils are actively involved in lessons so that they do not become distracted and disengaged in their learning, regularly checking during lessons that pupils have understood each step in their learning and, if necessary, adapting the lesson to help pupils before moving on to new work
  - improving the quality of lessons intended to improve pupils' reading skills
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to read regularly and write at greater length
  - setting higher expectations for the presentation of work in books
  - giving pupils more opportunities to work independently, solve problems and find things out for themselves in mathematics
  - giving pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work, when marking books and setting targets for the next steps in learning.
- Raise standards and ensure that all pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly the most able, those of average ability, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, by:
  - strengthening the quality of support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, fully meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language
  - making better use of teaching assistants especially at the beginning of lessons, ensuring pupils supported by the pupil premium reach the same standards as other pupils
  - improving the quality and use of record-keeping and target-setting so that all staff are clear what different pupils need to achieve and how best to support and challenge them in doing so.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance by:
  - monitoring the progress of all groups of pupils over time, paying particular attention to the progress of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, and taking prompt action to prevent any underachievement
  - empowering staff to use data effectively in order to provide pupils with the correct level of challenge in their work
  - increasing the contribution of subject leaders to developing a well-planned curriculum that inspires pupils in their learning
  - making more frequent checks on the quality of teaching and learning and

- providing appropriate support and challenge for staff to improve
- ensuring governance secures stable staffing and leadership as rapidly as possible
  - undertaking an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 8 – 9 July 2014**

### **Evidence**

I met with two groups of pupils in addition to talking with pupils at break times and in classes. I observed pupils' behaviour in and around school and talked with some canteen and lunchtime supervisors. I observed teaching in some mathematics, science, English and 'topic' lessons with one of the deputy headteachers. I met with four members of the governing body, two representatives of the local authority and with the headteacher and the two deputy headteachers. I also met with six of the teachers who lead subjects, specifically: mathematics; English; music, foreign languages; science; and physical education.

### **Context**

There have been a significant number of changes since my last visit:

- The associate headteacher left in June to be replaced by an executive headteacher for half of the week.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in June to work for half of the week, the remaining half she teaches in the infant school. She will become full time in the junior school from September.
- The two temporary assistant headteachers brought in to improve the school's leadership left at Easter.
- One teacher is on long-term absence and her class is being taught by a supply teacher.
- A newly qualified teacher started after Easter.
- Half of the teaching staff have resigned and will leave at the end of July.
- Interviews have taken place and new teachers have been employed and will start work in September.
- The school's business manager left the school at Easter. Her job is being covered for two and a half days a week by the infant school's business manager.
- Five new governors have joined the governing body.

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

In reading, pupils in Year 3 still make slow progress, which means over the year they lose the ground they gained in the infant school. As a result fewer pupils are on course to reach the levels expected for their age despite leaving Year 2 above the national average. In the other year groups pupils make expected progress but because they were behind at the end of Year 3 they struggle to make up the ground they need to attain the expected Level 4. In the most recent national tests, less than three-quarters of pupils attained the expected level for their age at the end of Year 6 and standards declined from 2013. There have, however, been improvements, particularly between Christmas and Easter. Pupils told me that they now read every

day, they have a much better selection of books to choose from which are better quality and they read to an adult at least once a week. These measures are making pupils enjoy reading more and have a better knowledge of different authors and books.

In writing, pupils make slow progress in Year 3 but pupils' work shows some significant differences between groups of pupils. The most able are challenged and make better progress in being able to use different types of sentences, using punctuation accurately and writing for different audiences and purposes. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 make expected progress but have difficulty catching up the ground they have lost earlier in the school. Standards at the end of Year 6 rose slightly this year. In 2013, for example, 20% of pupils attained the higher Level 5 but this year the proportion has almost doubled to 38%.

In mathematics, pupils make slow progress, which means that despite their standards being above average at the end of the infants, in Years 3, 4 and 5 they slide and pupils only just about attain the expected level for their age. Standards at the end of Year 6 this year declined when compared to standards in 2013. However, there are some small signs of improvement. Pupils that spoke with me, for example, have noticed an increase in the level of challenge in mathematics lessons, which they said are no longer too easy. In one Year 3 class pupils have started to answer more problem-solving questions and have started to think more deeply about their mathematics.

### **The quality of teaching**

There have been some improvements to teaching. Pupils who spoke with me made it clear that lessons had improved. Music lessons, for example, which were a significant concern at my last inspection, have improved. Similarly, pupils said there have been improvements in other subjects, such as science and information and communication technology but not in every class. In a science lesson, for example, the teacher established pupils' knowledge about the parts of a flower and their functions before introducing new vocabulary. Pupils stripped a flower while matching the new vocabulary to the part of the flower thus making progress in their knowledge and understanding of living things. Pupils were less content with the teaching of physical education because each week there was a different teacher or coach taking their lessons, meaning there was little progress or continuity to their learning.

The deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher have worked hard to improve individual teachers' practice. There are clear examples of where lessons are more challenging, teachers monitor the room during lessons to check on pupils' learning and where teachers' expectations, particularly of the most able pupils, have increased. In pupils' work, for example, since February there is a better match in most classes between the expectations teachers have in English and mathematics

with the other subjects such as science, history and geography. There is still some way to go because in a few classes pupils complete work that is too easy for them. The most urgent priority for the school is to improve the teaching of pupils who are known to have special educational needs. This group of pupils is predominantly taught by teaching assistants, who do most of the work for the pupils thus hindering pupils' development of skills, knowledge and understanding. In a few classes the teacher does not monitor the learning of this group because they are working with an adult; as a result the teacher does not intervene and improve the learning for these pupils.

The school is rightly working at the moment on improving its teaching of mathematics. In too many books pupils do not make progress in their knowledge or skills in using mathematics. For example, there were examples of pupils accurately adding and subtracting two numbers together but then being made to complete worksheets which were much easier, for example, overwriting the number 9 several times, then the number 8 several times when it was very clear they could already do this accurately.

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

There are mixed views about pupils' behaviour. Some lunchtime staff told me that pupils lack respect and manners and do not line up as well as they do in the infants. Some of this could be the lack of supervision at lunchtime. One member of staff for over 100 pupils in the canteen in my view is not enough, hence there is no time to reinforce manners, respect or school rules. Pupils, however, were adamant that behaviour is much better than it used to be. They said there is still some name calling but much less, there is still some swearing and bad language, but much less, and still some disrespect for others. Behaviour outside at lunchtime has improved. Much of this, according to staff and pupils, is because they have lots of equipment and more things to do, which means they do not get bored and run around aimlessly. It was fabulous during my visit to see lunchtime supervisors gleefully throwing balls with the children into hoops, jumping and swirling skipping ropes, throwing and catching with a lacrosse mitt and joining in on the trim trail. It made for a positive atmosphere at lunchtime and better behaviour.

In lessons, the behaviour I noticed was better than at my last visit. There is still some way to go, however, to make the lessons more exciting so that pupils do not have time or the inclination to go off task. On a few occasions the less able pupils did not respond to the teaching assistants sitting next to them. They would not do as asked or were visibly bored and disengaged. In my judgement they have a valid point because the work they were being asked to complete was dull and uninspiring. In one case, for example, the pupils observed the teaching assistant cutting up a worksheet, counting and marking off dots, taking off glued pieces of worksheet and repositioning them as pupils looked on with a bored expression on their faces.

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

One of the reasons for the slower than expected progress in improving pupils' achievement and the slower than expected progress in improving the impact of leadership, is the turmoil and disruption resulting from so many staff changes at all levels in the school. The existing deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher have carried on improvements since the departure of two assistant headteachers at Easter and subsequently the associate headteacher.

As a result of the disruption to the leadership of mathematics some important parts of the action plan have not been completed, such as the completion of the whole-school calculations policy. The leadership of mathematics needs to be quickly secured and the leader needs to take some quick and effective action to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics.

There have been some pleasing improvements to the leadership of other subjects. Leaders have now completed an initial audit of standards, teaching, pupils' work and planning in their subjects and have created action plans to improve over the next year.

Unfortunately there are disruptions to middle leadership caused by so many staff leaving at the end of July. However, the executive headteacher has worked well to create a plan for after September and after January to secure and improve middle leadership across the school. The newly appointed deputy headteacher, for example, has been working for half of each week trying to improve the transition of Year 2 pupils into Year 3, which is an important priority for the school. However, the Year 3 teachers were not released from class to meet parents on the day of the inspection or to complete lesson studies with teachers in Year 2, which could improve the transition into Year 3.

The school is getting better at evaluating its effectiveness. The judgements around teaching, for example, by the deputy headteacher taking into account pupils' work, lesson observations and data, are accurate. However, more work needs to be done to make sure every subject leader and teacher is able to assess pupils' levels accurately. For instance, the predictions for the national tests this year were overgenerous compared with the actual results.

Subject leaders have presented their findings to governors and there has been some monitoring by individual governors. A good quality report for example was written by the information and communication technology governor after a visit to the school, which has helped governors to make a decision in the finance committee about releasing funds for improvements to the school's infrastructure. Senior governors report that meetings are more challenging; members are more confident and are asking better questions than they were a year ago. For example, the decision to appoint another deputy headteacher was heavily scrutinised and questioned by

different committees to make sure it was the right decision for pupils at the school. However, despite my request at the last inspection the school's website still does not meet requirements and the governors still have not introduced an efficient system to check all statutory duties are being met. Despite this there have been some improvements so, for example, a governor came to the school to check whether health and safety requirements are being met. As a result of his report fire doors were used correctly and free from blockages.

Considerable time has been spent in the last few weeks securing staffing for September and securing leadership at all levels in the school. There is an ongoing consultation taking place with a view to close the school at the end of the autumn term and a decision is likely to go to Lancashire Council in the autumn with a view to expanding the infant school into a full primary school. The executive headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body of both schools have been planning and working together discussing different scenarios for the future of the two schools. The governing body has been visited by a representative of the Department for Education in initial discussions about converting to an academy.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to provide intensive support and guidance to the school. They have brought in, for example, support from Queen's Drive Primary school to help with special educational needs and with mathematics. It is too early to see any impact as these are areas which are still weak within the school. The local authority representatives have helped with the planning for the future. As a result there is a secured leadership for the school and a permanent teacher in each class from September. The personnel department of the local authority has helped with issues regarding contracts, employment of staff, illness of staff and support to bridge the gap left by the business manager who has left the school.