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12 September 2014

Mrs Victoria Milne  
Headteacher  
Nelson Castercliff Community Primary School  
Marsden Hall Road North  
Nelson  
Lancashire  
BB9 8JJ

Dear Mrs Milne

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Nelson Castercliff Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 September 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 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 May 2014.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I met with you, the current Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair designate, two representatives of the local authority and the subject leaders for English and mathematics. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. I visited classrooms with you. I also examined the school's single central record of staff employed at the school.

### **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection four teachers have resigned and five teachers have been appointed. Of the teachers joining the school, one has previously worked at the school as a temporary member of staff and another has been seconded as an assistant headteacher. This has allowed class sizes in Years 5 and 6 to be reduced and the senior leadership team to be expanded. Arrangements have been made to

ensure that administrative support is consistent, despite the long-term absence of a member of staff. Classes have been reorganised in Key Stage 2. A standards and effectiveness committee (SEC) has been established. This includes governors, senior leaders and a representative of the local authority. A new classroom has been created by moving the library to form two smaller libraries in the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 areas.

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

Senior leaders, governors and the local authority have worked together to build on the improvement already started before the inspection. The roles of senior leaders have been clarified, leading to more confident leadership. The appointment of new teachers has allowed senior leaders to bring different experiences and skills into the staff team. The reports from the reviews of governance and the pupil premium are starting to be used to shape development of these aspects. Governance is being strengthened by appointing a National Leader of Governance as Chair of the Governing Body, while retaining the knowledge and experience of the existing Chair. Members of staff have accepted the findings of the inspection and are working as a team to contribute to the improvement in the quality of education offered to pupils.

The response to the concerns raised about the historical administrative errors with the single central record was immediate. New checks with the Data and Barring Service have been completed on all members of staff currently in school. Scrutiny of the record shows that appropriate detail on staff identity checks is now included. The record still lacks confirmation of the required checks that teachers are not prohibited from teaching, although this checking is under way.

The local authority's monitoring and intervention team (MIT) adviser has worked with the headteacher to prepare a statement of action which links to the school's new improvement plan. These plans give details of actions intended for this term and provide an appropriate framework for the longer term improvement of the school. Expected improvements in achievement and the quality of teaching as the plans progress are clear. The plans will be monitored by the SEC at termly meetings. This is too infrequent to ensure that the improvements stay properly on track. Interim meetings of the SEC or of other governors' committees to look at specific improvement areas have been discussed by leaders, governors and the MIT adviser, but not yet confirmed. While the plans are fit for purpose, a number of different versions, particularly of the section concerning governance, are available. This has the potential to cause confusion and make it harder for all involved to be clear what is expected. Some dates still have to be set. The confirmation of the final versions of the plans for this term is an urgent priority so that staff can prepare more detailed plans on areas for which they are responsible, for example, for English and mathematics.

Consultants from the local authority for English, mathematics and teaching and learning are working with the school. The training they provide is contributing to improvement in the quality of teaching. For example, expectations of what teachers should be including in mathematics teaching are clearer. During this inspection, I saw pupils of all ages behaving well and making the most of the opportunities being presented by teachers and teaching assistants. During this visit the pupils in the Reception class had not started for this school year. While this arrangement is planned to allow teachers to make visits to new pupils' homes and has been used to give time to train teaching assistants, it means that learning time in school is being lost.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school 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 Interim Executive Director for Children and Young People for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely,

David Selby

**Her Majesty's Inspector**