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20 March 2015

Mr Jonathan Brookes  
Headteacher  
Inkersall Primary School  
Inkersall Green Road  
Chesterfield  
S43 3SE

Dear Mr Brookes

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Inkersall Primary School**

Following my visit with Karen Davies, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17–18 March 2015, 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 February 2014. 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 Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Key Stage 2, by:
  - increasing the accuracy of teachers' assessments and using these to set work at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils
  - improving the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) so that activities are more closely matched to pupils' abilities in order to move learning on more quickly
  - ensuring that pupils know what they are expected to do, especially when completing written work
  - checking pupils' understanding in mathematics lessons and quickly correcting any misconceptions
  - moving learning on more quickly when children are learning through play in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Make sure that all groups of pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - providing effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
  - providing a sound framework for both boys and girls to make good progress in writing, particularly in literacy lessons and ensuring that teachers are sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable in the teaching of writing
  - providing pupils with regular and systematic opportunities to develop their basic mathematical skills
  - checking carefully on the attainment and progress of groups of pupils, in particular, boys and those eligible for support through the pupil premium, and better meeting the needs of these pupils, by providing support to help them catch up.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, in order to improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
  - pupils' progress is rigorously tracked and analysed to identify any underachieving groups and take appropriate action to accelerate their progress
  - the school's self-evaluation is accurate and that the school development plan is focused on securing improved teaching and achievement across the school
  - pupil premium funding is used for the benefit of eligible pupils throughout the school
  - the governing body acquires the necessary skills to ask searching questions and be rigorous in its monitoring, in order to hold the school to account.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 17–18 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, several subject leaders, a group of pupils, a representative of the interim executive board and two representatives of the local authority. Inspectors spoke informally with several parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors visited all classes to observe teaching and learning and evaluated a sample of pupils' work.

### **Context**

There has been some turbulence in staffing since the previous monitoring inspection and a number of supply teachers have been employed. Three new permanent teachers have been appointed and will start next term. The school is due to become an academy on 1 June 2015.

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

Pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is accelerating because the quality of teaching is improving. The improved progress throughout the school is reflected in the school's most recent assessment data, which indicate that the large majority of pupils are now on track to reach the expected levels for their age by the time they reach the end of Year 6.

The work in pupils' books shows that the school's actions to improve the quality of writing are being effective. Pupils enjoy writing for a purpose and at greater length. Older pupils can discuss the different features they have included in their writing. Pupils are being given good opportunities to use and apply their basic mathematical skills to solve mathematical problems. Although some gaps remain for a minority of pupils, the school is well focused on tackling this.

Teaching assistants generally provide valuable support in lessons. They contribute to the much more effectively planned activities to help individuals and small groups of pupils with particular needs, as well as disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding. This is helping them to make progress in line with other pupils.

Children in the Nursery make good progress because of the good teaching, the well-planned environment inside and out, and the engaging and exciting curriculum. However, in marked contrast, the progress made by children in the Reception classes has not improved since the previous monitoring visit.

## **The quality of teaching**

Across Key Stages 1 and 2, improvements identified during the last monitoring inspection have been consolidated and built upon. All teachers are working hard and with success to improve their teaching. The quality of teaching seen during this visit was better than in the last visit, and this is reflected in the pupils' improving skills. This improving picture of teaching is underpinning the improving progress of different groups of pupils. However, senior leaders are aware that teachers do not always challenge the more-able pupils as well as they could do in lessons. This is because teachers do not always provide them with purposeful extension activities which enable them to fully apply their knowledge and develop their skills.

Teachers are consistently using success criteria well in lessons to ensure that pupils' learning is sharply focused on developing new skills and knowledge. Teachers and pupils are also using success criteria more accurately and effectively to evaluate the amount of progress pupils make over time. The quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is improving and this is making an impact on pupils' better progress. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the daily 'THINKersall time' where they are given time to review and respond to teachers' marking.

Throughout the school there is an increased focus on the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). In Key Stage 1, this is improving children's early reading and writing skills. In Key Stage 2, pupils' writing books show that their spelling skills are improving and pupils were observed using appropriate strategies to decode letters in order to read challenging words. A consistent approach to the teaching, structure and delivery of phonics in Key Stage 1 is evident in the use of high-quality resources and 'phonic walls' in all classes.

A newly refurbished classroom is providing a much improved learning environment for one Reception class, and there has been some reorganisation of provision across both classes. However, this is not sufficiently addressing the weaknesses in teaching and learning that need to be rectified. Staff do not plan activities with enough attention to the learning that might be expected. As a result, too many children drift from activity to activity without engaging purposefully with them, and staff are not able to accurately assess, support or challenge children's development as they play. In addition, there is some low-level disruption during activities chosen by the children because of this lack of direction. The teaching of phonics is weak. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to practise orally, or in writing, the sounds in words, and insufficient attention is paid to whether children are making the progress they could.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are polite and friendly and generally respond well to the behaviour management routines being used. Increasingly, pupils are developing positive attitudes to learning and gaining independence because of the improving quality of

teaching. Where lower demands are placed on them, their attitudes to learning are less positive and they are relaxed rather than focused and enthusiastic learners. Pupils report that they enjoy good friendships because there is little intimidating behaviour and they feel safe at school.

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

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are continuing to provide strong, ambitious and effective leadership. They have sustained the momentum of improvement indicated at the last monitoring inspection. They are ensuring that the best aspects of teaching are being shared across the school and are providing ongoing opportunities for all staff to visit other schools to observe good practice. The systematic implementation of the school's improvement plan is securing a significant change in atmosphere, ethos and expectations of what staff must do and what pupils are capable of achieving. Consequently, teaching is improving and pupils' progress is accelerating.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, all leaders have worked hard to embed key whole-school systems for assessment, target-setting, tracking pupils' progress and monitoring teaching and learning. As a result, there is greater consistency across the school. Weaknesses are identified quickly and effective action is taken. Senior leaders understand the rapid pace of change that is needed in the Reception classes and are fully committed to bringing it about. A new lead practitioner was due to take up post during the week following the visit.

The interim executive board reports that the good quality of information it receives from the headteacher provides its members with a clear understanding of where rapid improvements are being made and where further work is required. In addition, members of the board have spent some time in school to see for themselves what is happening 'on the ground'. This is enabling them to challenge and support senior leaders in making well-founded decisions about the future of the school.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided a range of support for the school and has well-considered plans for this continue as long as required. The link adviser provides considerable support through regular visits. The impact of local authority consultant support can be seen in the rapidly improving quality of teaching and learning throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The authority rightly recognises that senior leaders demonstrate the capacity to steer and drive improvement. Consequently, their role is increasingly focused on robust external quality assurance.