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11 June 2015

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 9 and 10 June 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 May 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

David Selby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met, including that the school's records contain all the required information, including that staff identity checks have been completed.
  
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, thus enabling pupils to make at least good progress in their learning, by ensuring that:
  - any inadequate teaching that exists is eradicated
  - teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - all teachers insist that pupils present their work to a high standard, are fully attentive in all lessons and that their attitudes to learning are always good
  - teachers use the targets they set for the pupils regularly and rigorously in order to check how well pupils learn
  - teaching challenges all groups of pupils, including the most able pupils, so they learn at a faster rate and reach the higher levels of which they are capable
  - teachers check pupils' work and their progress accurately and regularly, mark their books carefully and use the information from this to plan work that meet pupils' varying ages and abilities
  - pupils with special educational needs are provided with work which is matched to their abilities and challenges them to achieve their best.
  
- Rapidly improve standards of attainment and pupils' progress in English and mathematics by ensuring that all groups of pupils:
  - use and apply key literacy and numeracy skills, including phonic skills, regularly in other subjects
  - make secure and brisk progress in developing the skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation and use these skills consistently to improve their reading and writing
  - make at least good progress in mathematics, particularly pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, by addressing the gaps in their understanding of mathematical language
  - apply their mathematical skills to real-life problems
  - extend their speaking, listening, writing and mathematical skills in the Reception.
  
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, in order to rapidly drive forward improvements in teaching, achievement and in keeping pupils safe by:
  - ensuring leaders and governors are clear about their responsibility for checking on and managing the performance of teachers, including setting

- clear targets for pupils' achievement so teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make and weak teaching is eradicated
- ensuring that methods for checking on and evaluating pupils' progress are firmly in place and that the resulting information is accurate and used carefully to set clear and relevant steps needed to improve teaching and pupils' achievement
  - making sure the ways in which the development of knowledge and skills is planned for in each subject builds securely on what pupils already know and can do
  - building leadership at all levels and providing the opportunity for senior and middle leaders to contribute fully to the leadership of subjects and aspects of the school's work
  - developing the skills of governors so that they can effectively hold leaders to account and challenge them robustly enough about the school's performance, including the impact of the pupil premium funding.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 9 to 10 June 2015.**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work and examined documents including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and school records relating to attendance, behaviour and teaching. He held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, an assistant headteacher and a group of staff including four teachers and three teaching assistants. The inspector met with members of the school council and had informal conversations with other pupils during the school day. He talked with parents before school. Meetings were held with the Chair and vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and two representatives of the local authority. The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons, including one observation which was conducted jointly with an assistant headteacher. The inspector scrutinised samples of work from pupils in each school year. Some of this work scrutiny was completed with the headteacher. The inspector examined the single central record of employment checks on staff.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, a teacher has left the school and been replaced for the remainder of the school year. The school's administration team is back to full strength following the return of a member of staff from long-term absence.

Six teachers are expected to leave the school and another plans to move to part-time working at the end of this term. Arrangements have been made to ensure that these posts are filled ready for the start of the next school year.

Plans are in place for the school to become an academy as part of the Pendle Educational Trust from September 2015.

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

The increases in pupils' achievement identified in the previous monitoring inspection have continued.

The progress of pupils across the school and in Year 6, in particular, has been speeded up by the extensive programme of additional teaching designed to help pupils catch up if they start to fall behind others. Such pupils are identified through the better use of the data collected on how well pupils are doing. While this has led to the improvement seen, it has still not fully closed the gaps arising from pupils' previous, less effective, learning. The school's own data indicate that pupils currently in Year 6 are making progress at rates much closer to those found nationally. The proportion of pupils identified by the school as making expected progress in reading,

writing and mathematics is now close to the national expectations. However, too few pupils exceed the nationally expected rates of progress.

In mathematics, pupils with higher starting points generally make faster progress than those whose starting points are lower. While this reflects improvement for the most able, it also means that, over time, there continues to be a risk that pupils who would be helped by faster learning will not catch up with others well enough.

The work undertaken to improve the early years provision has continued. Teaching has been reorganised, new approaches to more formal learning introduced and more rigorous record keeping undertaken. These have contributed to improved achievement. The current data indicate that more children will achieve a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception Year and, therefore, be more ready for their move into Year 1.

The achievement of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by additional pupil premium funding, is generally similar to that of others. Pupil premium funding is provided for pupils who are known to have been eligible for free school meals at any time over the previous six years or who are looked after by the local authority. Where, as in Year 6, disadvantaged pupils do less well than others, leaders understand the reasons for this and ensure that steps are taken to close these gaps in these pupils' achievement.

During this inspection, pupils were observed to be working hard and showing determination to do their best. Pupils were seen to be making progress in each of the lessons visited. While these rates of progress varied, some pupils made the very rapid progress needed to ensure that they make up any lost ground arising from slower learning earlier in their school experience. Pupils' books show that they build up their knowledge and understanding over time. In addition, they demonstrate teachers' judgements of pupils' achievement are accurate.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching has continued to improve. The school's records indicate that no inadequate practice has recently been observed in the school. As in the previous monitoring inspection, the sample of teaching and learning seen during this inspection included no ineffective practice.

The improvements to subject leadership and team working have continued to contribute to more effective teaching and learning. For example, liaison between an assistant headteacher and the subject leader for physical education (PE) identified that improvement in pupils' basic physical skills would help their overall learning in PE. As a result, PE lessons are now planned to start with skills development.

The quality of marking remains inconsistent and, therefore, insufficient in helping pupils' learn as well as possible. Staff are clearer about what is expected because the schools' marking and feedback policy has very recently been reviewed and re-launched. Training has been provided, including some led by consultants from the local authority. However, staff still have to put the more effective approaches now required fully into place.

Teaching assistants are making an increasingly effective contribution to teaching. This is supported by carefully-planned training designed to help teaching assistants play a full part in pupils' learning. In addition, the emphasis on the work of teams and the greater openness and confidence in the school mean that shared improvement to teaching is easier. For example, joint discussion has identified how important it is for teachers' planning to be shared with all involved in pupils' work in a timely way. The inspector saw examples of effective work by teaching assistants, such as precise teaching about letters and the sounds they make to help pupils boost their reading and well-thought-out support for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English.

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

Pupils behave well; they work hard and get on well together. The school continues to be characterised by good relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils. The inspector observed Year 6 pupils kindly and carefully supporting the play activities of Key Stage 1 pupils during lunchtime. On this visit, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 were seen behaving equally well.

Members of the school council and other pupils are happy to share their views about the school and how well they are getting on. They say that learning has speeded up this year. The school council is contributing to the wider community through its work to reduce dog fouling in local streets.

Pupils' expectations of their own behaviour are high. They say that any incidents of bullying are infrequent and dealt with quickly by adults. The school's records indicate that instances of serious misbehaviour are rare and show that any are followed up systematically. While such issues are infrequent and records are kept, further analysis would be helpful to ensure that no patterns or underlying problems are missed.

School leaders continue to ensure that the school is safe. The single central record of employment checks continues to be complete and is well organised. Leaders look out for ways to improve safety, for example, new signs to ensure that car drivers do not park near the school are now being used.

The drop in attendance in the first term of this school year has been reversed. Absence is now at similar levels to last year. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is broadly similar to that of other pupils.

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

Leadership and management have been further strengthened because the changes introduced shortly before the previous monitoring inspection have had time to have more impact. The teams of teachers for Key Stage 1, and upper and lower Key Stage 2 ensure that pupils' progress and effective teaching approaches are discussed. Training has been provided for subject leaders and a staged programme of subject review and development introduced. Subject leadership could be further enhanced by ensuring that effective approaches to different topics are agreed and shared. This, in turn, would allow all to be sure that pupils in the same year receive the same key learning whatever their class.

The plans for improvement have continued to be developed and refined. A new plan has recently been prepared to set out the ways that leaders will ensure that teaching approaches for different subjects are ready for the start of next year. While some of the plans clearly indicate which actions have been completed, this is not always the case. Leaders are, therefore, still missing opportunities to celebrate successful improvements and increase challenge to ensure all actions are completed as quickly as required.

The school's website lacked some of the expected details at the start of this monitoring inspection. This was quickly rectified during the inspection.

The leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has developed in line with the recently changed national requirements. Leaders have ensured that teachers are more aware of the needs of all children and understand their responsibility for the achievement of all the pupils in their classes, including those with identified special educational needs. Training and further support has been provided in partnership with the local authority's specialist staff team.

The findings of the review of the use of the pupil premium funding recommended in the full inspection have been implemented. The current achievement and attendance of disadvantaged pupils are broadly similar to that of other pupils in the school.

Governance has further improved as the approaches identified in the review of governance have been fully established. Governors have more contact with leaders and teachers about learning. In addition, the structured visits to the school to find out about particular aspects of its work have continued. This means that governors are able to ask more probing questions about the school's effectiveness and so provide more challenge to leaders.

While the arrangements for the school's conversion to an academy planned for the start of next term are moving forward, not all details have been finalised. This has led to some uncertainty amongst staff and parents.

The school will face additional challenges because of the significant changes to teaching staff which will happen at the end of this school year. Senior leaders recognise the need to ensure that improvement to pupils' achievement does not slow because of this, particularly as some of the new teachers will be less experienced.

The parents spoken with by the inspector were generally pleased with the opportunities the school offers and the progress their children make. Some parents indicated that they have unanswered questions about the schools' conversion to an academy.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued its effective support and robust challenge, although this is now being reduced appropriately in line with the improvements in the school. The local authority's work has contributed directly to the improvement in subject leadership and in the early years, which are now embedded in the school's practice. The local authority consultants' work has covered specific aspects such as the consistency of marking and ensuring that teaching assistants are confident to make their most effective contribution to mathematics learning.