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1 July 2015

Mrs Christine Dean  
Interim Executive Headteacher  
Milton Primary School  
Leek Road  
Milton  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST2 7AF

Dear Mrs Dean

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

Following my visit to your school on 30 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 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 March 2015.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the interim executive headteacher and other leaders, governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. I briefly visited classrooms and spoke informally with parents at the start of the school day. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plans were evaluated. I also reviewed the school's records and documentation relating to various aspects of safeguarding and considered the responses from 21 staff questionnaires.

## **Context**

The school continues to be supported by Greenways Primary School whose headteacher is the interim executive headteacher at Milton. Since the inspection in March 2015 the leadership team has been expanded. An assistant headteacher joined the school in April and a further assistant headteacher will take up her post in September. The deputy headteacher retires at the end of the summer term. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed from September and is currently working in the school for two days a week. The school's business officer retired in June and a new post holder takes up this position from September 2015.

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

You have a very clear vision for what needs to be done to ensure that the school improves as quickly as possible. The capacity to make improvements has increased since the inspection by the appointment of additional senior leaders. You worked diligently with governors and the local authority to put in place a rigorous process to ensure that those appointed to leadership roles are of the highest quality. It was clear from my discussions with the senior team that they already work with a united determination and a consistent focus on improving the quality of teaching. You have ensured that leaders have clearly defined areas of responsibility and that they have appropriate levels of autonomy. You hold senior leaders to account effectively. Middle leaders are taking part in a programme of training and coaching which is developing their leadership skills and will enable them to undertake their responsibilities fully from September.

The school's action plan is based on thorough and honest self-evaluation. It takes into account all of the areas identified for improvement in the inspection report. The plan makes clear who will be responsible for checking that actions have taken place and who will evaluate the impact of actions. You have included precise milestones for each half term which map out the intended impact of the plan on improving the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils. The local authority has worked with you on producing the plan and the school plan is, therefore, well aligned to the local authority statement of action.

Senior leaders have produced very clear guidance for staff which makes clear the expectations of how lessons will be planned and taught and how pupils will receive feedback on their learning. These expectations are backed up by a thorough programme of training and development for staff, some of which has been supported by Greenways Primary School staff and advisers from the local authority. You are making regular checks that staff are putting these expectations into practice and are quick to provide additional challenge and support where needed. As a result,

the quality of teaching is showing signs of improvement. Teachers are now planning activities for pupils that are more closely matched to what they need to learn. This is particularly evident in writing where pupils are starting to be inspired by their study of high quality pieces of literature. Handwriting, presentation and spelling are improving because teachers point out to pupils where they need to make improvements. Teachers are becoming more consistent in following the school's marking policy and are providing clearer guidance to pupils on what they have done well and how to improve work further. Where pupils respond to these comments there are tangible improvements. However, there are times where pupils are not clear about what the teacher is asking them to improve and, consequently, they are unable to make the changes needed, which limits their progress.

As a result of improvements in teaching, achievement is also starting to improve. The school's own assessment information is consistent with the standards of work seen by Her Majesty's Inspector. From this it is evident that the focus on improving writing is likely to result in a higher proportion of pupils achieving at the expected level at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 this year. Improvements in the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 2 are likely to result in a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected level. The school anticipates that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 will be much higher than last year. However, too few pupils achieve the higher levels in both key stages. You have identified this in your plans and have put in place strategies to ensure that the most able pupils in school receive work that challenges them.

You acted promptly to arrange the review of the school's use of the pupil premium (additional government funding). The draft report which you have just received has helpful recommendations which you have started to put into your action plan. You are now placing a higher priority on identifying how well those pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium are progressing when producing analysis of data.

Governors demonstrate their determination to ensure that they play their part in improving the school. The governing body had recently reformed at the time of the inspection and has commissioned its own review of governance. The recommendations from the review have informed the governors' improvement plan. A programme of governor training has been established. A 'Task Force' group of governors meets monthly, with the local authority adviser, to monitor the impact of the action plan. Governors now request and receive more detailed information about the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils and, as a result, they are becoming more effective in providing challenge and strategic leadership.

The local authority adviser knows the school well and has brokered an effective package of support for the school, as part of a well-coordinated joint local authority and school action plan. This includes ongoing support from Greenways Primary School as well as direct support from the adviser and other officers. This support has been effective in improving the quality of planning for writing and increasing the accuracy and consistency of teachers' assessments. The local authority adviser has worked well with governors and leaders to ensure that parents have been kept well informed about how the school is responding to the inspection report. Meetings for parents, surgeries with governors and a wealth of information on the website have been provided. Regular review meetings, led by the local authority, enable its officers to keep a careful check on the school's ability to plan for improvement.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly-qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection. However, this should be to work in Key Stage 1 only where there is sufficient capacity to provide the support required.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mitchell Moore  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**