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2 July 2015

Mrs Suzanne Chapman  
Acting Headteacher  
Ryton Junior School  
Main Road  
Ryton  
Tyne and Wear  
NE40 3AF

Dear Mrs Chapman

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

Following my visit with Suzanne Lithgow, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 30 June and 1 July 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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 to the Strategic Director, Care, Well-being and Learning for Gateshead. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Brown

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Urgently improve pupils' behaviour and safety by:
  - taking immediate action to eradicate all forms of bullying to ensure that all pupils feel safe in school
  - making sure all pupils know who to contact, if they have a concern or feel anxious
  - organising appropriate training for all staff in how to tackle homophobic bullying
  - improving the effectiveness with which teachers manage pupils' behaviour in lessons
  - maintaining detailed records of behaviour incidents and analysing the results, so that the school can identify any patterns and support pupils effectively.
  
- Improve rapidly the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that the school's evaluation of its own work is accurate and based on rigorous checking of pupils' achievement, and that leaders use this information to direct their plans for improvement more effectively
  - implementing efficient and accurate systems by which the school can measure the progress of individuals and groups of pupils
  - ensuring that teachers' performance management targets are closely linked to the pupils' achievement and that staff are robustly held accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes
  - providing high-quality training, so subject leaders make a stronger contribution to raising standards in their areas of responsibility
  - ensuring that governors are well informed about the school's performance and have the skills necessary to hold the school to account effectively
  - making sure that the school's website is kept up to date and contains all the required information, including the pupil premium grant and the impact of how it is spent.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so it is consistently good or better by:
  - making sure teachers use assessment information about pupils' previous learning to set work at the right level for pupils of all abilities, particularly the least able and those who are disadvantaged
  - checking pupils are given clear information about how they can improve their work and have time to act upon that advice.

- Improve progress in mathematics by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan work in mathematics that provides a good balance between what pupils already know and the skills they have to learn
  - offering more opportunities for pupils to practise efficient methods of calculation and to apply their skills in real-life, problem-solving activities
  - insisting that pupils present their mathematical work to a consistently high standard
  - providing high-quality training to extend the skills of teachers in the teaching of mathematics.

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 second monitoring inspection on 30 June to 1 July 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors met with the consultant and acting headteachers, senior and middle leaders, the teaching staff, governors, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and teaching in every year group in the school. During these observations inspectors spoke informally with pupils and checked their work. A range of documentation, including the school development plan, safeguarding records and the minutes of governing body meetings, was scrutinised.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection visit on 12 February 2015, the executive headteacher has returned to leading the infant school. An acting headteacher, seconded from a good school within the local authority, is now in post full time. A deputy headteacher has been appointed from within the school staff. Plans for the school to become an academy are at the early stages of consideration.

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

The school has introduced a new system for collecting and analysing information about pupils' progress. Senior leaders are confident that the data they hold on the progress of pupils and groups of pupils in all year groups are now more accurate.

Pupils join the school in Year 3 with levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that are above that expected for their age. In the national Key Stage 2 tests in 2014, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level in reading was significantly above the national average. Attainment in writing and mathematics was slightly above the national average. Overall, pupils' attainment was one term ahead of other pupils nationally. The school's own data, confirmed by a detailed scrutiny of pupils' books, suggest that results in 2015 will be better than those achieved in 2014, and that the proportion of Year 6 pupils making expected progress in reading, writing and in mathematics will increase this year.

In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 achieved levels in reading, writing and mathematics which were around a year behind other pupils in the school. However, teachers are now better able to intervene rapidly when pupils have not achieved as well as expected. As a result of this work, together with some improvements in teaching, the school is confident that these gaps will narrow this year. Current tracking data show that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in all year groups are making good progress.

## **The quality of teaching**

Senior leaders are making determined efforts to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school. There is evidence from lesson observations that standards are rising and expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are higher.

Detailed and more robust assessment information is now used more effectively by teachers to inform their planning. In the majority of lessons seen and in pupils' work, teachers plan tasks which are pitched at different levels to match pupils' abilities. In the best learning seen, pupils are making more progress because the teacher ensures the level of challenge expected of them increases; consequently a faster pace to learning develops. However, expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve are still at times too low.

Marking shows an improvement across the school. Where pupils' books are marked well helpful feedback is provided, making it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve further. However, some marking still focuses only on what pupils need to correct rather than on how their work can be improved. Presentation in pupils' writing and mathematics books has improved, although it is more variable in some other curriculum areas.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors and are keen to discuss the recent improvements they have seen in their school. They feel safe and report that bullying, once a regular occurrence, is now very rare. Pupils are enthusiastic about how the new behaviour policy, with rewards and consequences, has improved conduct in lessons. Observations of lessons confirm that there is very little inappropriate behaviour.

Pupils have a clear understanding of what makes an unsafe situation and, for example, are able to talk knowledgeably about e-safety and the potential dangers when using social media. They are taught about different forms of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, and know what to do if they witness or experience it. School records confirm that the number of serious behaviour incidents has decreased significantly since the previous monitoring inspection.

Punctuality to school and to lessons is good and this reflects well on pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning. Attendance is around the national average.

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

The acting headteacher and consultant headteacher have developed a strong partnership, fully supported by the governing body, to drive improvements in the school. As a result, there is a developing sense of collective commitment among staff

to improving the outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders and the governors have worked with the local authority to develop more rigorous monitoring and evaluating processes. Middle leaders are becoming more involved in improving provision but need to develop further their skills in monitoring its quality and impact. However, self-evaluation is still over generous in some areas and assumes that issues in the school will be more rapidly resolved than is realistic.

Systems for checking on pupils' progress are strengthening. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is measured each half term and this information is evaluated by senior and middle leaders. The system is becoming more secure as teachers' skills in assessing progress grow. As a result, teachers know which pupils are on track and can give extra help to those pupils who are falling behind. Middle leaders have received effective training from the local authority to improve the accuracy of pupils' assessment, allowing teachers to provide targeted support where required. This work is beginning to have a positive impact on the achievement of all pupils.

Following the review of the use of the pupil premium (additional government money) carried out by the local authority the deputy headteacher has taken responsibility for monitoring the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Work in this area has had a significant impact on the progress of these pupils.

Following a full review of governance by the local authority the governing body, strengthened since the previous inspection, now has a steering group which meets on a regular basis to support and challenge school leaders. Members of the governing body are now far more active in school and minutes of their meetings confirm that they are effective at holding school leaders to account.

Plans for the school to become an academy are under consideration.

### **External support**

Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the local authority has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose. The School Improvement Partner appointed by the local authority has worked closely with the acting headteacher and governors to develop leadership capacity across the school.