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5 October 2015

Mrs Jo Machon  
Acting Headteacher  
Thanet Primary School  
Tedworth Road  
Hull  
HU9 4AY

Dear Mrs Machon

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

Following my visit with Peter Heaton, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 30 September and 1 October 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 fourth 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:

### **Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection without a conversation with Her Majesty's Inspector.

This letter and the 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 Kingston upon Hull.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to accelerate progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure that:
  - work for pupils of all abilities enables them to build well on what they know, understand and can do
  - marking of pupils' work tells them what they have done well, the next steps to take and teachers check that pupils have acted upon their guidance
  - all teachers check how well pupils are learning in lessons so that pupils' misunderstandings in lessons are corrected quickly
  - pupils get opportunities to practice mathematics skills in other subjects to help them to improve the specific skills that they have learned
  - teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation in all their writing tasks.
- Improve pupils' attendance, their attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons by:
  - continuing to work with parents to further reduce the number of pupils who do not attend school regularly
  - teachers providing interesting and good quality learning activities, especially for boys
  - teachers having high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the amount and quality of work they expect pupils to complete to the best of their ability.
- Urgently increase the impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, so they improve teaching and pupils' achievement quickly by ensuring that:
  - all senior and subject leaders have the training and skills to carry out their roles fully and effectively
  - leaders check and report back accurately on their areas of responsibility, particularly the rate of pupils' progress, so that the school has a full picture of the performance of all areas of its work
  - the school's targets for improvement are measureable and focus on the most pressing weaknesses
  - the governing body has a full understanding of the school's work, including by finding out information for itself, so that it can both challenge and support the school more effectively.

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

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 30 September and 1 October 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed lessons, many of which were jointly observed with the acting headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised documents and a number of pupils' books. They held meetings with the acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher and staff with particular subject and inclusion responsibilities. Meetings were also held with the Chair and another member of the governing body, a headteacher who is mentoring the acting headteacher, a representative from the local authority and groups of pupils.

### **Context**

The acting headteacher took up her post on 1 September 2015. Three members of staff left at the end of August 2015, several of whom had short-term contracts which were not renewed. Five new staff were appointed.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The results of the national tests in 2015 for pupils in Year 6 were generally improved compared with the results in the previous year. Results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were also better compared with the previous year. Similarly, more children at the end of the Reception Year gained a good level of development in 2015 than before, with boys doing better than girls. Despite some improvements, the results of the national tests in 2015 suggest that disadvantaged pupils are lagging behind their peers in some areas.

The proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics check (the sounds that letters represent) also improved compared with 2014. However, a disappointing number of pupils who retook the phonics check in Year 2 gained the expected level. These results for pupils in Year 2 were similar to those in the previous year.

In spite of improvements, writing in Key Stage 1 remains a weaker subject compared with reading and mathematics. Senior leaders recognise that more pupils at the end of Year 6 need to make more than expected progress, in mathematics particularly. Leaders know that they need to use, and ensure that others use, the recently implemented assessment and tracking system accurately so that any underachievement can be picked up quickly. The targets set for pupils at the start of the school year in 2014 remained the same throughout the year and were not adjusted when necessary. As a result, the level of challenge for different groups of pupils was not always appropriate.

Inspectors saw that pupils make variable progress in some classes because teachers do not provide work that is sufficiently challenging for particular groups of pupils. This is especially true of those who are most able where they have to wait for others to catch up before being given something else to do.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Some of the weaknesses identified during the previous monitoring inspection, for example not regularly correcting the punctuation and spelling mistakes made by pupils and not ensuring that their work is presented well, are still evident throughout the school. In some lessons, pupils are given too many instructions all at once and for certain pupils this is too confusing. Pupils told inspectors that at times, 'Work set is about right' but at other times the comments, 'It's too easy' and 'We've done it before' were heard. Generally pupils behave sensibly in lessons but inspectors saw some classes where teachers had low expectations of what pupils can do. This meant that pupils became bored and misbehaved, and as a result they made very little, if any, progress. A large number of worksheets, especially those linked to writing and guided reading, are used in some lessons. Consequently, completing them puts a ceiling on individual pupils' ability to write creatively and at length.

Inspectors saw that some pupils made rapid progress because they were well challenged. Misunderstandings were corrected during lessons so that pupils understood where they were going wrong. Additionally, their books were marked well so that they could learn from their mistakes. However, these positive points are not firmly embedded throughout all classes.

There are lessons where connections between a particular topic and mathematics are made naturally and make sense to pupils when they occur. Pupils are also encouraged and expected to use mathematical language. However, these links are sometimes tenuous and occur randomly within lessons.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Leaders continue to work persistently with parents to ensure that they are involved in their children's education. Latecomers and non-attenders are chased up rigorously. Consequently, despite some parents taking their children on holiday during term time, overall attendance has improved compared to the time of the section 5 inspection. Parents are encouraged to attend assemblies whenever possible and some join in the training sessions run after school. These activities and their involvement in the reading recovery programme provide them with a clear understanding of life in the school and are appreciated by their children.

Around the school pupils behave sensibly and in class they are happy to share ideas with each other. Inspectors saw this in action as pupils discussed how to solve a particular problem together before they asked for help. Changes to the curriculum

and the new homework books are welcomed by many pupils. These are designed to help pupils investigate a topic on their own and use the information gathered as they answer questions. Several of these topics are linked to pupils' own experiences and current events, for example the Hull Fair.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The strengths in leadership noted during the previous monitoring inspection are increasing as all leaders and governors take ownership and become more confident in their areas of responsibility. Middle leaders are getting better at being able to monitor their subjects but their effectiveness is limited as they are not yet involved in lesson observations and strategic planning. The school improvement plan is a detailed document with a 'pacing sheet' that identifies when meetings and observations are to take place. These documents need to be strengthened by setting quantifiable goals to be achieved at regular intervals during the year. As a result, senior leaders and governors would be able to check frequently that interventions and systems were making a difference to the quality of teaching and the progress made by all groups of pupils. Senior leaders recognise that they need to ensure that different groups, particularly those who are disadvantaged and the most able, make the progress of which they are capable.

Members of the governing body are clear what the priorities for improvement are and where some groups of pupils are doing better than others. Similarly, they know where teaching is strongest because they visit the school regularly and receive quality reports. Senior leaders and governors recognise the need to identify specific weaknesses in provision rather than identifying a more general need. For example, they know that pupils in Year 6 who take the grammar, punctuation and spelling national test need to do better, but they are unclear whether one aspect is weaker than another.

### **External support**

Local authority officers monitor the school regularly to check that improvements in systems are sustained and that the quality of teaching is getting better. Their recent review confirmed that the progress made by pupils is better than on their previous visit but some weaknesses still remain. They are providing financial support so that the acting headteacher can continue to be mentored by the headteacher from another primary school. Other leaders in the school are also benefiting from this help and support. The capacity of the governing body has been strengthened by the addition of extra members added by the local authority. Strong links continue with Foredyke Primary School and others within the Cooperative Trust group of schools so that strong practice can be shared and discussed.