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Dear Mrs Potts

Special measures monitoring inspection of Adderlane First School

Following my visit to your school on 6 July 2016, 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 that 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 that took place in June 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the executive director of wellbeing and community health service for Northumberland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in June 2015.

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching in all key stages, particularly in writing and mathematics, so that it is consistently good in order to raise achievement rapidly, by:
 - assessing what pupils can do accurately and using this information to set work which enables pupils to make rapid progress in their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length about topics which excite them
 - ensuring that pupils apply their mathematics knowledge through problem-solving and develop their ability to explain their reasoning
 - making sure that teachers and teaching assistants use questioning to challenge pupils to think deeply about their learning
 - increasing opportunities in the Nursery and Reception classes for children to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics so that more reach and exceed the Early Learning Goals in these areas
 - taking immediate action to improve pupils' attitudes to learning by reducing their reliance on adult support and encouraging them to take more personal responsibility for improving their work
 - improving pupils' handwriting and the pride they take in the presentation of their work.

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - developing a structure of leadership to support the newly appointed headteacher so that responsibility is shared for managing the performance of teachers
 - improving the skills of leaders at all levels so that they can judge the quality of teaching over time accurately and make rapid improvements to teaching
 - ensuring that improvement-planning includes sharply-focused, measurable targets which can be monitored and evaluated by all leaders, including governors
 - setting ambitious targets for pupils' achievement which ensure that all pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able make faster progress to reach their full potential
 - improving systems to raise the attendance of all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, to at least the national average
 - conducting an external review of pupil premium funding to ensure that the effectiveness of spending is evaluated robustly and that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is accelerated
 - conducting an external review of governance to ensure that the governing body has the necessary skills to challenge the school's performance and hold leaders to account.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 6 July 2016

Evidence

This monitoring inspection focused upon end-of-year outcomes, the impact of teaching over time in mathematics, developments in the early years and the impact of leadership. The lead inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the subject leaders for English and mathematics and three governors. The lead inspector also spoke by telephone to the local authority primary and early years commissioner. The inspector observed the mathematics teaching which was taking place as part of the school's transition day and completed a mathematics work scrutiny alongside the headteacher. The lead inspector considered the provision in early years alongside the deputy headteacher.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has appointed a deputy headteacher. Two teachers will leave the school at the end of the summer term and one new teacher has been appointed to start from September 2016. The school will convert to an academy and will become part of the Wise Academy Trust from 1 November 2016.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders are continuing to address the inadequacies which placed the school into special measures. Changes to leadership and governance arrangements have improved leadership capacity. The governing body now has no vacancies. The most recently appointed governor has promptly discovered the strengths and priorities of the school through regular visits. Governors' checks on the progress made in addressing the school's priorities are becoming more thorough. The appointment of the seconded assistant headteacher to the post of deputy headteacher has ensured leadership continuity and strengthened capacity.

The headteacher and leaders have worked effectively to bring the school's improvement plan and English and mathematics plans into better alignment. The pupil premium review plan has been effectively implemented and monitored regularly by the headteacher, school improvement partner and a governor. While the governance plan has been implemented, some governors' knowledge of it is not secure and aspects of the plan remain incomplete.

The headteacher is progressively developing her leadership and management skills with support from a headteacher mentor from a local school. Visits to good schools beyond the locality are widening her understanding of moderation approaches and have raised her aspirations of what is achievable by pupils in English and

mathematics. A better-established system to collate information about the quality of teaching is providing school leaders and governors with a clearer overview of strengths and areas for development of teaching across the school. Staff and leadership arrangements which better meet the needs of the school are in place for September 2016. The headteacher has worked hard to ensure a smooth transition to academy status next term.

The English and mathematics subject leaders are continuing to develop into their leadership roles. The mathematics subject leader is benefiting from support provided by a subject leader in a good school. Both subject leaders have a better understanding of their roles and are producing more evaluative reports which are better linked to the impact of actions taken and improving outcomes for pupils. Their knowledge of early years is improving following training by the deputy headteacher. Pupil progress reviews are more formalised, with a greater focus on actions to close learning gaps. However, checking the impact of these actions is not yet sufficiently sharp.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The deputy headteacher is continuing to improve the quality of teaching and provision in the Reception and Nursery classes. Appropriate actions have been taken to address Reception children's gaps in learning and this has helped to overcome much of the underachievement caused by the less focused start to the year in the autumn term. The improved practice in Reception is now also more evident in the Nursery class. These developments, along with support from the Wise Academy Trust, are bringing improvements across the early years. The provision for learning in the early years outdoors area is still not as strong and this remains a focus for further enhancement.

The quality of teaching over time is not yet impacting sufficiently on pupils' outcomes in mathematics. The school has raised the profile of mathematics through regular mathematics theme days. Pupils are motivated by these and by the opportunities for cooperative learning and developing problem-solving skills. While the staff are planning work to take account of the developments in the national curriculum, sometimes opportunities for developing reasoning and using and applying skills are not fully developed. There are also occasions where there is insufficient challenge for the most able pupils. Leaders' analysis of teachers' timetables indicates that the time provided for mathematics is not well balanced with other subject areas such as English.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Thoughtful strategies are in place to support pupils' transition to the middle school and their next class. Pupils were well engaged in active learning with their new teachers throughout the transition day observed during the inspection. Year 4 pupils

were on a visit to prepare them for starting the middle school in September. Parents of younger children are well informed about how early years provision operates.

Outcomes for pupils

In 2016 there has been an improvement in the proportion of Reception children achieving a good level of development, although this remains below the national average. Boys' achievement is not as strong as girls' and the school is taking action to address this.

The proportion of Year 1 pupils who are achieving the expected standard in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has increased. This has improved upon the school's previous year's results, which were above the national averages.

By the end of Year 2 pupils have achieved very close to the school's targets in reading and writing. Pupils' mathematics achievement is not as strong and leaders recognise that this is an area for increased focus across all year groups.

The number of disadvantaged pupils varies across year groups. Leaders, including governors, are carefully monitoring the proportions of these pupils who are working at or above the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The achievement of these pupils is variable and the school would benefit from measuring their progress from starting points to ensure that any attainment gaps with other pupils are closed.

External support

The school has benefited from support from the local authority and a headteacher mentor from a local school. This continues to develop the leadership skills of the headteacher. The local authority school improvement partner and partnership coordinator have provided useful guidance on school self-evaluation and approaches to marking. Links with Beaconhill Community Primary School have supported the improvement of mathematics subject leadership. Training by the Wise Academy Trust is helping to develop early years practice.