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Mr Garry de Castro Morland  
Starbeck Community Primary School  
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Dear Mr de Castro Morland

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Starbeck Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26–27 September 2018, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in April 2017.

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school has sufficient capacity among existing staff and may appoint one newly qualified teacher before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in April 2017.**

- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress from their various starting points, by:
  - improving pupils' skills in mathematics and writing across key stages 1 and 2
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - using assessment information to plan learning that meets the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring that teachers make best use of time in lessons and act quickly once pupils are ready to take their next steps
  - making sure that the planned curriculum, especially in mathematics, supports a logical development and application of pupils' skills and understanding
  - setting higher standards for pupils' presentation of their work and ensuring that pupils complete what is asked of them.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - evaluation of the impact of the school's work is accurate and that actions planned to address issues are timely and robust
  - leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, establish an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning
  - systems to record pupils' assessment information include the progress made by the most able pupils
  - the information provided to governors on the performance of the school is accurate and complete so they are better able to support and challenge
  - the identification of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities is accurate so that additional funding is spent on those pupils who really need it
  - governors continue to implement the recommendations of the recent local authority review.
- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it is in line with that of other pupils nationally.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 26 September 2018 to 27 September 2018**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including the school's improvement plan and the local authority's statement of action. She met with the headteacher, three members of the governing body and the local authority school improvement partner. The inspector looked at pupils' work in books and observed 10 parts of lessons. The inspector spoke with pupils at lunchtime and around school.

### **Context**

The headteacher joined Starbeck Community Primary School in an acting capacity in May 2017. The previous headteacher resigned from the post in December 2017 and the current headteacher took up the substantive post in April 2018. Two teachers left the school in July 2017. One of the jobs was filled by an existing part-time staff member and the second by an experienced teacher. A third teacher left in spring 2018. The headteacher deployed the deputy headteacher and a part-time teacher to fulfil the duties of the departing teacher. In addition, two teaching assistants left the school in the last academic year. These posts were not filled. The headteacher teaches one day per week.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Starbeck is led by a determined and committed headteacher who has a clear line of sight about the direction he wants the school to take. He has raised expectations across the entire school and managed to keep staff on board and travelling with him. The headteacher has the respect of staff, governors and pupils in equal measure. In the words of one of the governors: 'He has taken the school by the scruff of the neck and moved it forwards.' Pupils told the inspector that they now feel 'pushed more to achieve'.

The headteacher quickly set about ensuring that senior and middle leaders were able to fulfil their roles appropriately. Leaders have received much support from local authority advisers, and the headteacher has provided well-judged guidance to enable them to become more effective. This has resulted in a far more confident leadership team who are fully aligned to the vision of the headteacher. However, some leaders are still unaware of the progress of different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

The headteacher has earnestly engaged with the local authority and has stayed focused on delivering actions planned in the statement of action. Alongside local authority officers, the headteacher and leaders for English and mathematics have conducted a range of monitoring activities that have enabled them to get an accurate grasp of the quality of teaching now being delivered in school.

The headteacher provides extensive and accurate reports to governors. Governors consider this information through the newly formed standards and finance committees. Governors check that what they are being told by leaders is accurate through questioning senior and middle leaders and through regular visits to school. Governors now have an accurate picture of the performance of the school and are well able to challenge leaders.

Leaders reviewed the way they assess pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and as a result the proportion of pupils who have been identified has reduced by half. Teaching assistants are better prepared to support the learning of pupils who have SEN, so although their progress has not been as rapid as that of other pupils in school, they are well supported and making steady progress.

The school was subject to an academy order in June 2017 but has not yet become an academy. Leaders are working closely with a local trust, which has conducted a risk assessment with a view to sponsoring the school in the near future. The staff and governors are very positive about this process.

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

The headteacher swiftly recognised the need to ensure more accurate processes for assessing and capturing pupils' progress. He has set up new systems and held staff to account for the progress of pupils. This has helped staff to establish pupils' starting points and to match teaching more appropriately to what pupils can already do. Teachers have increased their expectations and, overall, pupils are rising to higher levels of challenge. Through the introduction of a whole-school approach to teaching handwriting, teachers have effectively influenced pupils' attitudes to their work. In all classes, most pupils are successfully using neat and cursive handwriting and taking pride in their work.

Staff at all levels have received considerable training, including in the teaching of phonics, writing and mathematics. Teachers have received coaching from specialists and joined in moderation activities with colleagues from other schools. In most classes, teachers are ensuring that pupils are learning well throughout the lesson. However, in some classes, resources have not been selected carefully enough. Insufficient thought has been given to the purpose of some activities, leading to missed opportunities to practise new skills and to deepen understanding.

With the encouragement of the headteacher and guidance from a local authority adviser, the leader for mathematics has effectively supported improvements to teaching in this subject. Teachers are now paying careful attention to planning for mathematics lessons that optimise pupils' learning. Evidence in pupils' books shows that they are given ample opportunities to practise and embed new skills. Teachers are ensuring that pupils are stretched to think more deeply about mathematics and to apply their learning to a range of different problems. Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy working with more challenging numbers and talked animatedly about practising their basic skills using an online program.

Leaders have worked successfully to improve the quality of teaching for writing, and the leader for literacy has overseen the introduction of a new approach. Teachers have enthusiastically adopted this method to consistently model writing. This has helped pupils to master new and adventurous vocabulary and to help them to build sentences for use in their work. Work in pupils' books shows that they are responding well to the input by their teachers and are producing lively and interesting writing. Teachers' thoughtful planning is helping pupils to understand grammatical devices and to include them in their work. There is a high degree of consistency emerging in the teaching of writing, particularly in key stage 2. However, not all classes are able to demonstrate sustained writing.

In 2018, Year 6 pupils overall did not perform well in the external test for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Leaders identified the main area of weakness as spelling and have introduced pupils to a new, online spelling scheme. Pupils really enjoy using this vehicle for learning, and their spelling is improving as a result.

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

Pupils at Starbeck are happy and respectful. They told the inspector that 'children are really friendly'. They said they were not aware of any bullying and that they learned a lot about bullying through lessons and assemblies. Pupils' books show that they are benefiting from a broad curriculum. Pupils really value the raft of extra-curricular opportunities they now have. They were excited about attending drumming and football clubs at lunchtime, and the chance to attend after-school drama and tennis classes.

Effective challenge from the governing body has resulted in appropriate action being taken by leaders to support pupils to attend school regularly. Pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is now in line with national averages. Until last year, the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils was high. Although there is an improving trend, some disadvantaged pupils are still regularly late to school and this is having a negative impact on the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Starbeck has suffered several years of low outcomes, including in 2017 when pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 was in the bottom 20% of schools for reading and mathematics. Outcomes in 2018 were much better. Pupils' attainment is now broadly in line with, or above, national averages at all key stages in reading, writing and mathematics.

As a result of improvements to teaching in mathematics, a higher proportion of pupils attained standards expected for their age at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. In 2018, at the end of key stage 2, 86% of Year 6 attained the expected standard in mathematics, an improvement of 26% when compared to 2017. Disadvantaged pupils also attained well compared to other pupils nationally. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard remains below the national

average in mathematics.

Outcomes in reading and writing are also encouraging. At the end of key stage 2, two thirds of pupils attained the expected standard in reading and three quarters in writing. In addition, more pupils attained the higher standard in reading and writing than was seen nationally. However, disadvantaged pupils did not attain as well in reading and writing as others nationally.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are now making better progress than in the past and their progress throughout school this year, particularly in writing and mathematics, is to be celebrated.

### **External support**

North Yorkshire local authority has been effective in its support for the school since the inspection. It was instrumental in the appointment of the headteacher. The school improvement partner and several advisers have been regular visitors to the school, checking on leaders' progress in delivering actions. They have been particularly successful in developing the skills of leaders for English and mathematics. Consequently, these leaders are clear about their responsibilities and diligent in carrying them out.

The school improvement partner successfully recruited two national leaders of governance to mentor members of the governing body. The national leaders have recently withdrawn because governance is now effective.