

6 March 2008

Mrs P Pendlebury  
Headteacher  
Horton Grange Primary School  
Spencer Road  
Great Horton  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD7 2EU

Dear Mrs Pendlebury

#### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HORTON GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Jane Hughes and Janette Corlett, Additional Inspectors to your school on 4 and 5 March 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2006. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Strategic Director – Services to Children and Young People and the Managing Director of Education Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF HORTON GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 4 and 5 March 2008

### Evidence

During the visit, inspectors analysed a range of documents and examined samples of pupils' work. Twenty two lessons were observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teaching staff, the chair of governors and a member of the governing body, Education Bradford and groups of pupils.

### Context

Since the previous monitoring visit in October 2007, a new headteacher has been appointed and took up the post in January 2008. The senior leadership team is strengthening and presently includes a permanent deputy headteacher and one permanent and one acting assistant headteacher. A new assistant headteacher will join the school after Easter. Internal staffing changes have also resulted in the appointment of a single Foundation Stage leader. A new chair of governors, previously the vice-chair, has also been appointed.

### Achievement and standards

In 2007, the school's national test results at Key Stage 2 improved and a higher proportion of pupils gained expected and higher levels in English, mathematics and science when compared to 2006. At Key Stage 1, attainment also improved in reading, writing and mathematics. However, although there was an overall improvement in both key stages, standards, remain exceptionally low. The school continues to work hard to address the legacy of underachievement and the variations in progress across the school highlighted at the previous monitoring visit. Recent action has resulted in closer monitoring and scrutiny of individual, class and year group progress through lesson observations and the sharper use of performance information.

Evidence seen during the monitoring visit, including lesson visits and teacher assessments, indicates that accelerated progress is now evident in most year groups and standards are continuing to rise in both Key Stage 1 and 2. This is particularly apparent in mathematics and overall in Year 5. However, progress in writing across the school and also that of higher attainers is less marked. Challenging targets have been set for the 2008 national tests in Key Stage 2, and Key Stage 1 targets are presently under review.

Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Children's skills when they join the Nursery are well below those expected for their age in all areas of learning. By the time they join Reception, however, they have made good progress and achieved well, particularly in their personal, social and emotional

development. In Reception, children make satisfactory progress and join Key Stage 1 with skills below national expectations.

Skilled teaching assistants continue to provide good support particularly for those pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This ensures that they make similar progress to their peers. The school is improving its information systems to strengthen the tracking and analysis of pupil performance across the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Raise the achievement of all pupils in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and are eager to do their best in lessons. The playground is lively but pupils show respect for each other's well-being. Playground helpers provide useful support to their peers and take their responsibilities seriously. In discussion, pupils report that any instances of bullying are speedily addressed by adults. The newly appointed school councillors are proud of the contribution they make to the school community and are already working on some good ideas to improve the school, including increasing the variety of playground equipment. Colourful and informative displays around the school help pupils to learn more about important elements of their personal development. Attendance levels are broadly satisfactory, although too many parents continue to take pupils on extended holidays during term time. The school has recently introduced rigorous attendance monitoring procedures and these are working well day-to-day, although their impact is yet to be fully realised.

### Quality of provision

The school is working urgently to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. Internal and external monitoring, together with focused and timely professional development, has increased the understanding of the extent of the improvement that is still required. Teachers have responded well. However, there is still much to do to ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good.

During the monitoring visit, more than half of the lessons seen were satisfactory. The new headteacher and school leaders have a clear picture of the teaching quality within the school and are working swiftly to address satisfactory and weak practice. They recognise that there is too much variation between classes and age groups, effectively limiting pupils' ability to maintain their progress between key stages. The quality of planning continues to improve, with differentiated activities clearly indicated. In practice, however, although pupils are well supported, they are not always sufficiently challenged. In good lessons, teachers are knowledgeable about

pupils' prior attainment and through skilful questioning assess their progress throughout the lesson. Expectations of all pupils are high and teachers promote a 'can do' attitude to learning. Pupils clearly enjoy these lessons and accelerated progress is evident. In contrast, satisfactory teaching ensures that most pupils reach the required objectives through extensive teacher input. In some lessons, pupils spend too much time consolidating learning when they are more than ready to move on. As a consequence, although they continue to behave well, they tend to lose interest and their progress is limited.

Teachers' understanding and use of assessment information continues to develop rapidly. Improved communication and regular focused meetings between senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers have resulted in a greater awareness of pupils' potential and the rate of progress which should be expected. Accelerated pupil progress is now evident throughout the school. The school is aware, however, that information on pupils' prior learning is not yet used well enough to plan lessons which will consistently raise standards.

Work is generally marked regularly with helpful, developmental comments in some subjects, for example, literacy. Good examples of individual targets were also seen, giving pupils information on how they could improve further. However, despite extensive monitoring, clear variations in marking quality exist between subjects, classes and year groups.

Since the last monitoring visit, teaching assistants across the school are now more effective in their role. They are well deployed, providing good support for both individuals and groups of pupils and they are having a positive impact on pupil progress.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Improve teaching and learning to a good standard to help pupils to quickly catch up on lost ground – satisfactory
- Ensure that pupils have a clear knowledge and understanding of their learning targets and that the school tracks their progress towards reaching them robustly – satisfactory

## Leadership and management

The new headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and is driving forward, at pace, the improvement agenda. She has fostered a good team spirit amongst the staff who are now fully aware of the need for rapid improvements in all key areas. They have embraced change enthusiastically and are wholly committed to improving pupil performance across the school. Accelerated pupil progress in core subjects is already evident.

The senior leadership team is providing very effective support and the role of middle leaders continues to improve. Core subject leaders regularly check lesson planning, the quality of marking in workbooks and assess pupils' progress through pupil interviews. Team working in science and ICT has helped to raise their profile and in

science, improve the quality of assessment information. Year group leaders are more involved in monitoring the quality of lessons, through collective planning and workbook scrutiny to develop greater consistency within year groups. Refinements to pupil progress meetings have helped to promote a more focused dialogue on pupil performance between senior leaders and class teachers.

At present, regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is helping to establish clear criteria for further improvements. Increased staffing stability, a significant reduction in teacher absence, and substantial improvements in classroom resources and in the learning environment are starting to make a difference to the quality of teaching within the school.

The school has a secure view of the further work required to continue to raise standards for all pupils. Self-evaluation is honest and fully recognises aspects which are not yet good enough. The focus on increasing the proportion of good quality teaching is a high priority within the amended and well-considered action plan.

The governing body has been proactive in managing the recent swift and significant change in leadership at the school. They are aware of what needs to be done to improve the school further and continue, with the support of Education Bradford, to develop their level of monitoring and challenge.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, so that the school provides an acceptable standard of education – good
- Work to ensure that the quality of pupils' education is not disrupted – good

### External support

The school continues to receive very good support and advice from Education Bradford and is increasing the pace of improvement in all areas. Present resources are fully responsive to the school needs, in the context of the improving capacity of the leadership team. Robust evaluation reports provided by the school improvement partner continue to help the school to keep its progress on all key issues under review, with clear recommendations for action. Good relationships exist between the school and Education Bradford and the school values the support from consultants, linked primary schools and human resources personnel.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Strengthen teachers' understanding and use of assessment information to ensure all pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons.