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23 June 2008

Mrs Paula Bailey  
Headteacher  
Blaydon West Primary School  
Blaydon Bank  
Blaydon-on-Tyne  
Tyne and Wear  
NE21 4PY

Dear Mrs Bailey

### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BLAYDON WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Denis Goodchild Additional Inspector, to your school on 19 and 20 June 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures is satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection is 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 and the Director of Education for Gateshead.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Shepherd  
Additional Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BLAYDON WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 19 and 20 June 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including observations of lessons, an assembly and behaviour around the school and at playtimes. Inspectors scrutinised documents, samples of pupils' work from each class and analysed school data. They held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher designate, co-ordinators, the interim executive board (IEB) and an adviser from the local authority (LA).

### Context

There have been a considerable number of changes since the previous visit. Due to the decreasing number of pupils in the school, redundancy procedures had begun and the number of senior leadership posts was being reduced. These processes have been completed and co-ordinator posts have been reallocated. The budget is now balanced. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed and will take up her post at the beginning of the autumn term. Several features of the school building have been improved.

### Achievement and standards

The results of the national tests and assessments in Year 6 and Year 2 have not yet been published. School data show that standards are beginning to rise in Year 6. Standards in writing in this year group are rising faster than other subjects because this is a key priority for improvement and the new strategies are beginning to have an impact. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in both English and mathematics is increasing and is now closer to the national average. Nevertheless, standards overall remain significantly below average. In Year 2 standards remain below average with standards in mathematics being higher than in reading or writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in this year group has increased in writing but there are still far fewer pupils reaching these levels than the average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that progress is uneven between different classes. The new tracking systems are giving much more detailed information about the progress of individual pupils each term. Although there are considerable differences in the proportion of pupils who are on track to reach their targets between each year group, in all cases this proportion has increased in the last term in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in writing is at least satisfactory and in some Year 5 and 6 classes it is good. Progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slower than other pupils. The school is aware of this difference and has plans to improve provision for these pupils.

Progress in the Nursery is satisfactory. In Reception, progress is good overall and outstanding in writing. This is due to the teacher's expertise in targeting groups of children carefully to support their different needs, emphasising the technical skills

and in having high expectations of their capacity to improve. A higher proportion of children are reaching the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals than last year with more children exceeding these levels, particularly in writing and in personal, social and emotional development.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous monitoring visit on the priority of raising standards and increasing achievement through providing a better match of work to different pupils' needs.

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last visit and is good overall. Pupils move around the school sensibly because there are clear routines in place and staff supervise conscientiously. There is a clear sense of order and calm to the school day. Attitudes to learning are improving and in some classes pupils are taking increasing responsibility for their own learning, particularly when the target setting systems are working well.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous visit. The key weakness remains in the variations in quality between different classes which results in varying rates of pupil progress. The proportion of good lessons is increasing and there are a few outstanding features in the teaching of writing. The school has worked hard to improve teachers' use of questioning, which was a priority for improvement, and this is now at least satisfactory and in some lessons is very effective. Another key focus has been to improve marking. The school has been most successful in achieving this goal and it is now consistent through the school. It is particularly good in writing and there are examples of outstanding guidance on how to improve that is followed up well in lessons. Assessment systems are beginning to have an impact on teachers' planning and in the best lessons, teaching reflects their understanding of pupils' different learning needs. Not enough use is made of the assessment of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to support their particular needs.

Staff are becoming more skilful in providing a balanced curriculum in literacy and numeracy. The writing curriculum now covers a good range of different styles and there are regular opportunities for older pupils to write extended pieces of work. The school is aware of the need to tackle the reading and speaking and listening curriculum in more detail. The school has produced a clear calculations policy in mathematics that is being used consistently. There are plans to build on this improvement for mental mathematics. Teachers are developing the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum in the computer suite but miss opportunities to use computers during other lessons in order to extend pupils' understanding of its use.

Pupils now receive at least satisfactory levels of advice on how to improve their writing and mathematics. There is a small proportion of very high quality guidance in writing, both in the use of individual targets in lessons and in detailed written

feedback in pupils' books. In the best examples, teachers check back to ensure that pupils have responded appropriately to the advice.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2008:

- Raise the school's expectations of the pupils and take closer account of information from assessments in planning for their different needs – satisfactory.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum for English, mathematics and ICT – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the headteacher remains a key strength of the school. Her clear focus on the key areas for improvement, her development of partnerships with external support and expertise and her determination to develop the provision systematically are all resulting in improvements. The monitoring of the school's developments is now more rigorous and the level of skills of some key staff is increasing in this aspect, particularly in the scrutiny of pupils' work. The data tracking system is working well in identifying different rates of progress of pupils in each year group and in making staff more accountable. The school is now relying less on outside expertise for monitoring and analysing data. The training carried out with all staff has increased their understanding of their roles as co-ordinators, but many staff are new to their subjects due to the reorganisation. There has been satisfactory progress on this priority for further improvement. Together with the deputy headteacher designate, they are enthusiastic about taking up their new responsibilities.

The IEB continues to provide very effective leadership and management in using their breadth of experience and expertise in making key decisions to improve provision, particularly staffing. Arrangements are now in place to create the shadow governing body although there is a very short time scale for ensuring that it is in place by the end of summer term.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2008:

- Monitor the implementation of planned improvements closely, and evaluate their impact on pupils' achievement - good
- Strengthen the role of the governing body in holding the school to account for the quality of education and standards attained by the pupils - satisfactory.

### External support

The quality of the support from the LA remains good and is an important contributor in providing different levels of expertise to support the school's key priorities. Consultants and the school's adviser provide regular advice both to the whole staff and to key leaders. The support from two National Leaders in Education also continues to provide high quality expertise to improve the school's provision. Their contributions to staff training and the partnerships between staff from the different

schools are extending staff's awareness of where they need to improve and how to develop their individual skills.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Raise standards and increase achievement through providing a better match of work to different pupils' needs.
- Develop the role of middle managers.
- Increase the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.