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23 June 2008

Mr Wynne  
The Headteacher  
Yardley Wood Community Primary School  
School Road  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B14 4ER

Dear Mr Wynne

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF YARDLEY WOOD  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Peter Isherwood Additional Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 June 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in January 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures is inadequate.

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 Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF YARDLEY WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 11 and 12 June 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with senior staff, groups of pupils, a representative of governors and a representative from the local authority.

### Context

Following the inspection in Jan 2007 a deputy headteacher has been seconded to the school.

### Achievement and standards

There has been no significant improvement in standards. Achievement also remains inadequate. Overall, test results in 2007 represented inadequate achievement. The school's data suggests outcomes in the national tests in Year 6 will be comparable to those the school attained in 2007.

Currently the school's own data, work in pupils' books, and that seen in lessons confirm this picture of inadequate achievement in English, mathematics and science, with little improvement. More able pupils continue to make inadequate progress. The progress of lower attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, remains satisfactory. The school has taken steps to identify the pupils who are underachieving and is planning interventions as part of its participation in the Intensifying Support Programme. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Pupils make inadequate progress in Years 1 to 5. Progress is better in Year 6 because higher attaining pupils make good progress, but this is insufficient to overcome a legacy of previous underachievement.

The school has improved its academic guidance. It now knows which pupils are below age related expectations and is about to launch a system that will more accurately monitor the progress every pupil is making.

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

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science and accelerate the progress of the average and above average attaining pupils – inadequate.

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes. Most are eager to learn, but occasionally a small number become restless when they are not fully engaged in learning by the teacher. Children in Nursery and Reception work well together showing good levels of cooperation. Older pupils have insufficient opportunity to talk to each other about their ideas. Pupils showed positive attitudes to their work even

when it is too difficult or too easy. Older pupils say that behaviour has improved recently, particularly now classes enter school by different entrances.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage. Adults match work well to individual need and they use stories such as 'The Magic Carpet' and 'The Pied Piper' very effectively to develop learning. Children are spellbound when listening to stories and respond well to the probing questions asked by staff. Teaching assistants contribute considerably to the success of this provision. The quality of teaching and learning in the rest of school is not improving at a quick enough rate. Observations in lessons and pupils' books show that too much learning is inadequate or just satisfactory and too little is good. The school is making some progress in reducing the amount of inadequate teaching but only one good quality lesson was observed outside of the Foundation Stage during the monitoring visit. In a mathematics lesson on measuring complex shapes, work was very well matched to individual need and challenged all pupils. Success criteria were clear and built very well on what went before. Pupils applied themselves well and commented that they benefit from the adult support and developmental marking. Lesson planning has improved since the previous inspection and is now consistent throughout the school.

Teachers almost always use learning objectives and success criteria, but the impact of these varies too much. Some teachers do not fully understand the concept of success criteria and the relationship with learning objectives. There is insufficient awareness of different levels of thinking or the steps pupils must go through to achieve their challenging targets. As a result, success criteria are frequently not well matched to the capabilities of different groups of pupils within the class. Teachers refer to learning objectives in their marking, but the codes used cause confusion for some pupils. Pupils know their targets but they do not all know how to move on to their next stage of learning. Marking is not used consistently to develop learning. It often lacks challenge for the highest attaining pupils. In some classrooms there is evidence of promising attempts to ensure greater pupil awareness of progress through 'learning ladders'. However, generally, the lack of a secure understanding of pupils' abilities leads to work being set at incorrect levels and, as a result, it frequently lacks challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils. The overuse of worksheets in some classes limits the opportunities for pupils to carry out independent tasks. Quite often, introductory sessions in lessons are too long and pupils are inactive and do not learn enough.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils now meet statutory requirements. Programmes of building work and changes to routines have improved health and safety in the school. Pupils say that they now feel safer in school since the changes were made.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring teachers plan lessons which provide all pupils with sufficient challenge and activities that are well matched to their ability – inadequate
- ensure all safeguarding procedures are fully met – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

Leadership within the school is improving, largely because staff and pupils are enthused by the vision being developed by the new headteacher. This has resulted in all staff sharing a strong desire to improve. Inspectors were impressed with the constructive response of all staff to the critical feedback provided. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. Important improvements to accommodation are being made to ensure the greater safety of pupils. Middle leaders are growing in confidence as their roles become more clearly defined, although there is some uncertainty about the part they play in monitoring the work of the school. The recently appointed acting deputy headteacher has increased capacity, resulting in an accelerating rate of improvement. Monitoring and evaluation have improved so leaders at all levels now have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Appropriate training has taken place and the school is wisely considering which new initiatives will bring the greatest benefit. Although progress is being made dealing with the inadequate teaching, there has been less success in ensuring teaching enables more able pupils to make better progress. There is not yet sufficient monitoring to ensure good ideas are consistently well implemented. Teachers are not receiving enough tailored guidance to ensure they can implement improvements.

The school's plans focus on the right priorities and generally identify suitably ambitious outcomes. Challenging targets have been adopted and now underpin the school's academic guidance. The school now has systems in place to enable governors to hold the school to account for raising standards, although progress reports do not contain sufficient quantifiable evidence of improvement. Governors are more involved evaluating the work of the school and are also enthusiastic about the changes.

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

- improve the quality of leadership and management to bring greater rigour to monitoring the work of the school – satisfactory.

## External support

The local authority statement of action has had a satisfactory impact on the school. Good measures have been taken to build the capacity of the school in the short term by supporting the secondment of a deputy headteacher and easing the school's financial difficulties.

The local authority has provided significant additional support, including much appreciated advanced skills teachers and help in producing a rigorous book trawl. However, there has not been enough support for the school in monitoring provision.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure more effective use of success criteria and objectives in order that all pupils are consistently challenged.

- Further clarify the roles of staff in evaluating the work of the school and monitor more frequently in order that staff receive more timely guidance on how they can improve.