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1 May 2009

Mrs Amanda Casey  
Headteacher  
Bewsey Lodge Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Casey

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Bewsey Lodge Primary School

Following my visit with Liam Trippier HMI and Michelle Ravey, Additional Inspector, to your school on 29 and 30 April 2009, 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 November 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may 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 Children's Services for Warrington.

Yours sincerely

Marguerite McCloy  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Bewsey Lodge Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 29–30 April 2009

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, leadership team and other staff; the school improvement partner, associate headteacher, chair of governors and groups of pupils.

## Context

Since the November 2008 inspection, one teacher has resigned and one is currently on long-term sick-leave. Another teacher was absent during the visit, and their class was taught by a visiting teacher from a local school.

## Achievement and standards

Standards of attainment are well below average overall in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Test results for 11 year olds in 2008 confirmed that too many pupils made inadequate progress during their time in school, and underachievement was more common among girls.

The school's revised targets for Key Stage 2 pupils in 2009 are unlikely to be met because of the gap between expected levels and current attainment, as a result of previous underachievement. However, there are early signs of the positive impact of the school's efforts to accelerate pupils' progress. These can be seen in pupils' work during lessons and in their books.

Key Stage 1 assessments in 2008 reflected the significantly below average standards reached in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading levels, in particular, were exceptionally low for almost half the pupils. The school has taken action to remedy this and bring about more rapid progress for this year group at the start of Key Stage 2, and this is beginning to bear fruit. However, as with most year groups, and particularly in the current Year 4, there remains much 'catching up' still to do. This is a key focus for the school and its reading intervention strategies in Year 4 are beginning to show very positive results in the significant improvement made by a number of pupils recently.

In lessons observed, pupils were making satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning. Although it was not a focus for this inspection visit, the Early Years Foundation Stage provision continues to be a strength of the school and children make good progress there.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards and improve achievement throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 – satisfactory

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils who spoke to inspectors expressed their views that the school has improved since the last inspection. As one pupil explained, 'We now have smaller groups so we can focus better and the teacher can give us more help..... but they don't give you the answer, you have to find it for yourself.' Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are warm, friendly and cheerful and love to stop to say hello and offer help or have a chat! Good, caring relationships are evident in lessons. Teachers and assistants are responsive to pupils' personal development needs, and intervene sensitively within lessons to preserve pupils' self-esteem and to help them develop basic skills.

Attendance has improved and a wide range of effective strategies have been implemented to secure further improvement over time. The school tracks individual pupils who have below accepted levels of attendance, involving the local educational welfare officer and meetings with parents and carers where necessary. Pupils are entered into a prize draw if they meet the '100 day challenge.' This is starting to have an impact, as illustrated by the higher proportion of pupils achieving 100% attendance between February and March, for example. Parents have all received a school leaflet entitled 'Attendance Matters'. This is a clear and well presented communication that strikes the right balance between offering support whilst reinforcing the legal requirement on parents to send their child to school. There is a levelled and considered response to attendance issues, with a series of letters that are graded in order of seriousness. The school has implemented 'Txt2Parents' and a Parent Hotline to keep them informed about school events and celebrations. This is also used to raise awareness regarding punctuality and attendance. The headteacher monitors attendance closely and reports this to governors every half term. Weekly attendance figures for all classes are shared at celebration assemblies. Every opportunity is taken to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality, and newsletters to parents always feature an item related to this. This rigorous and strategic approach to monitoring attendance is having an impact, and the school is working hard to improve it further. Current attendance is just marginally below the national average.

Progress on the area for improvement since the last inspection in November 2008:

- Improve attendance - good

### Quality of provision

Teachers are responding well to the focused whole-staff training provided by local authority advisers and primary strategy consultants. Senior leaders are also supporting some teachers to ensure that the quality of lessons improves following



monitoring and coaching. Leaders are fully aware that there is still variability in teaching quality and inspectors' judgements are similar to those of the school. However, no inadequate lessons were observed during this monitoring visit, which reflects the improvements made so far. Satisfactory practice is still predominant, and in some lessons, expectations of pupils are not as high as they could be. Pupils who spoke to inspectors say that the quality of lessons has improved, learning is more fun and they enjoy school more as a result. Pupils generally behave well and show positive attitudes to learning although sometimes they can appear passive.

A common feature of lessons is a clear structure with attention paid to planning appropriate tasks that are tailored to meet pupils' learning needs. In good lessons, teachers ensure that these tasks are informed by detailed assessments of individual pupils' capabilities, in order to bridge gaps in their learning. The work of skilled teaching assistants impacts well on pupils' progress and behaviour, particularly during intervention activities and small group work in classes. Good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Individual Education Plans are thorough and regularly reviewed.

'Talking partners' strategies are often used in lessons to consolidate pupils' thinking and develop deeper learning. However, not all teachers are equally effective at promoting this and some opportunities are lost for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Where interactive whiteboard technology is used in lessons, this helps to motivate and engage learners. Younger pupils are also responding well to learning with the use of recently introduced small laptop computers during lessons.

Good lessons move along at a lively pace, keeping pupils motivated and engaged in a range of interesting tasks, including practical activities. Assessment for learning is used well to check pupils' understanding and set to them challenging targets to improve their work. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, activities are not particularly interactive or challenging and pupils are less interested and involved. The pace of teaching is slower and this affects pupils' attention and their ability to concentrate, especially if they are sitting for too long listening to adults. Sometimes teachers' classroom management is not as effective as it could be in ensuring that time is not wasted getting pupil's attention, if a minority are chatting or disturbing others.

Pupils are aware of their learning targets and older pupils know how to achieve these. The marking of pupils' work is good as a result of effective training and development in this area; teachers provide useful guidance to pupils through the 'stars and a wish' marking in books.

Progress on the area for improvement since the last inspection in November 2008:

- Eradicate inadequate teaching and ensure work is appropriately matched to the needs of all pupils so their learning is at least good - satisfactory

## Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leadership team are developing the capacity to secure school improvement. Currently, this is reliant to an extent on the support of local authority advisers and primary strategy consultants. The headteacher appreciates regular opportunities to share ideas and discuss the school's progress with the associate headteacher. This support is particularly valuable at a time when the headteacher is involved in ongoing meetings to resolve some staffing issues. The school's action plan focus clearly on its key priorities for improvement, and the format is well matched to the local authority's support plan to ensure coherence.

The middle leader with responsibility for assessment has made a valuable contribution to this area of the school's work. Rigorous systems are in place and staff are guided in understanding and using this information to inform their planning. Senior leaders track and monitor pupils' progress carefully. Summary reports inform leaders and governors of areas to develop and where progress is improving. Some aspects of whole-school evaluation and the overview of assessment information are not shared with all staff. Senior leaders are aware that there is scope to develop further the school's communication and consultation systems to promote whole-staff teamwork and ownership of improvement plans.

The governing body has ensured that all statutory policies are now in place and a timeframe has been suggested for the regular monitoring and review of these. Each governor has completed a skills audit questionnaire, the results have been analysed and acted upon in order to design bespoke training for the governing body. This has been delivered by the local authority and has focused on the three key roles of governance: setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability and monitoring and evaluation. Governors are starting to forge links with subject leaders and classes, and are developing a governors' visiting policy to observe teaching and learning. A handbook is being collated to ensure that governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors have requested regular reports from subject leaders to keep them well informed about pupils' progress. An in-depth audit has been completed on the three strands of community cohesion. These have helped the school to identify areas for development and a community cohesion policy is now in place. The school is aware of the need to give pupils the opportunity to work with others from different ethnic, religious, non-religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

Progress on the areas for improvement since the last inspection in November 2008:

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, monitor, evaluate and take decisive action to secure improvement – satisfactory
- Ensure governors meet all their statutory responsibilities - good

## External support

The school is receiving a high level of support and guidance from the local authority, which had been monitoring the school since September 2007 due to concerns about standards, leadership and governance. This continued following a review in summer 2008 because insufficient progress had been made and the quality of teaching and learning was too variable. These concerns mirrored those found by inspectors when the school was made subject to special measures in November 2008. The local authority was, therefore, well prepared to produce a statement of action and put support plans quickly into place with the full cooperation of the school. Action plans are appropriately resourced and relevant. They include success criteria by which the effectiveness of the local authority's intervention and support can be evaluated. Expected completion deadlines are currently spread over a relatively short timeframe, and these will be adjusted in order to avoid overburdening the school at any one time.

Following the last inspection, two additional local authority governors were appointed, and the new chair of governors has previous experience in a range of schools. The associate headteacher worked alongside the headteacher of Bewsey Lodge for two days each week last term, this has now been reduced to one day a week. The school's link adviser, who is also the school improvement partner, provides additional support and challenge in regular meetings and monitoring activities, and has met with the headteacher to review the school's targets for 2009 and 2010.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Raise standards and improve achievement throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that a higher proportion of lessons are good or better and the rate of pupils' progress is accelerated.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, monitor, evaluate and take decisive action to secure improvement