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30 November 2009

Mr P Beaumont  
Headteacher  
Manchester Road Primary School  
Manchester Road  
Droylsden  
Tameside  
M43 6GD

Dear Mr Beaumont

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Manchester Road Primary School

Following my visit with Chris Griffin, Additional Inspector, to your school on 26 and 27 November 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in January 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

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 Tameside.

Yours faithfully

Gill Jones  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring inspection of Manchester Road Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 26 and 27 November 2009.

## Evidence

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

## Context

Since the last monitoring inspection in July 2009 the following changes have occurred: a new headteacher started in September 2009 and two temporary teachers are covering for staff on long-term sickness leave.

## Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 have improved since the inspection in January 2009. The standards reached by seven-year-olds are now in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, fewer pupils reached the higher Level 3 in mathematics and writing than is found nationally, indicating that more-able pupils, in particular, are still not achieving their potential. The standards reached in English, mathematics and science by 11-year-olds in the national assessment tests were below those attained nationally, but demonstrate a slight improvement from 2008. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is well below that found nationally and pupils eligible for free school meals achieved well below their peers. Overall, pupils' progress remains inadequate.

Inspectors scrutinised current work in pupils' exercise books and during lessons. The standards reached by most pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are still below those expected, particularly for the more able. This is because of a legacy of underachievement and some inadequate teaching which has yet to be fully eradicated. At Key Stage 2, standards in writing remain particularly low. There are too many technical weaknesses in pupils' work. These include the incorrect use of capital letters and punctuation, weaknesses in spelling and very few examples of extended writing at the upper end of Key Stage 2 where pupils are required to use complex sentences. The assessment of pupils' progress is too infrequent and information is not yet collated by senior leaders with sufficient precision to target additional support effectively. However, inspectors noted that the volume of work in pupils' exercise books has increased and marking is more frequent.



Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good; they are polite and friendly to visitors. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, pupils say behaviour has improved significantly. They provided several examples of the headteacher dealing effectively with bullying and misdemeanours. A particular strength cited by pupils is that the headteacher always checks to see if their problems have been solved. They explained that he listens to them and shows he cares; consequently, they feel safe in school. Pupils are keen to lead a healthy lifestyle and make sensible choices at lunchtime. Attendance remains broadly average and pupils say they enjoy school. They appreciate the more regular opportunities to do practical work in subjects like science. However, they are frustrated in information and communication technology by the frequent failure of computers, which prevents them from making progress in their work. The behaviour and independence demonstrated by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage remains good. Excellent protocols for encouraging good behaviour exist in this part of the school which are not shared widely enough.

The effectiveness of provision

Inspectors observed a range of lessons across the curriculum. The majority were of a satisfactory quality, a small number were good and a similar proportion inadequate. Improvements noted since the last monitoring visit include a far more practical focus to lessons, particularly in science and mathematics. For example, in a satisfactory Year 2 mathematics lesson counters were provided to support pupils learning about division. In Year 6 groups of pupils were learning whether solids dissolved in water by testing different substances and recording the results. Pupils confirm these good developments and say their lessons are becoming more interesting. In the better lessons, the quality of teachers' questioning has improved and they are using more supplementary questions to prompt pupils to extend their answers. But there is still too much reliance on whole-class questioning and individual hands-up responses, particularly at the start and end of lessons, which does not give all pupils enough chance to explore their thoughts. Most lessons still start with a long introduction and some pupils, especially the most and least able, become inattentive where this does not match their learning needs well.

Marking is frequent and provides encouragement, but does not reinforce specifically what pupils have done well or what they need to improve. It does not pick up sufficiently on correcting pupils' habitual mistakes, particularly in writing, which is



preventing them from achieving higher standards. Pupils say they appreciate completing fewer worksheets and show greater pride in their work. Teachers continue to appreciate the advice and support from local authority consultants. They report that it is helping their understanding of assessing pupils' progress and have a clearer picture of the National Curriculum levels pupils should be achieving. This is leading to better-quality planning, which is now focusing on what pupils of different abilities should be learning and achieving. However, in the lessons observed, there was still insufficient challenge and guidance for the more able pupils. Staff recognise the positive impact that the headteacher's close monitoring of planning is having on the curriculum, reporting that because they annotate their plans to show what pupils have learnt and provide them for scrutiny, it ensures that they teach all the lessons timetabled. This is demonstrated by the variety of work in pupils' exercise books.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and ensure that it consistently provides pupils with the challenge needed for them to learn as they should – satisfactory
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking so that it lets pupils know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve their work further – satisfactory
- Ensure that information about pupils' progress is used effectively and consistently by all teachers to meet pupils' learning needs fully – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new headteacher is demonstrating highly determined leadership. He sets high expectations and has quickly defined an ambitious direction for the school. Parents and carers, staff and pupils testify to the impact the new behaviour policy and reward system has had on improving pupils' behaviour. School improvement planning is clear and unequivocal. Staff say they understand their roles and are committed to improving the outcomes for pupils. Performance management is rigorous and in line with national conditions of service. All aspects of the school's work are monitored closely by the headteacher and he is supported well in this by the local authority. He has an accurate picture of staff effectiveness and his evaluations are insightful. Staff morale remains buoyant and teachers are keen to continue to improve their practice. They are supportive of the new headteacher and appreciate his approachability and energy for improvement. However, despite very rapid improvement in the last 12 weeks, the school remains in a very fragile position because the energy and will to change is not embedded at all levels of leadership and inadequate teaching has yet to be eradicated. Consequently, the overall improvement since the school was placed in special measures remains inadequate.



The senior leadership team is strengthened by the addition of the new literacy coordinator from the Early Years Foundation Stage. The team's members remain keen to take more responsibility for monitoring their subjects and/or key stage and have a clearer understanding of their role. Their knowledge of data on outcomes for pupils has improved; however, this information is not gathered frequently enough to enable them to carry out their monitoring duties effectively. Senior leaders appreciate the additional management time provided to enable them to complete their tasks. However, although this time has been appropriately allocated, it has not been used effectively to secure a sufficiently speedy and robust system for collating and analysing data on pupils' progress. For example, currently senior leaders do not know exactly how much progress all pupils have made since the last monitoring inspection in July.

The governing body recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They report that the information they now receive is enabling them to challenge the school on its performance more rigorously.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that managers rigorously evaluate all aspects of the school's work in order to identify and speedily address weaknesses in performance – satisfactory

#### External support

The new headteacher appreciates the strong support and guidance he is receiving from the local authority. As a result, he has a realistic perspective of the speed at which much needed changes can be made. The local authority has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is working well with the headteacher to delegate its resources effectively.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- The priorities for further improvement continue to be those identified at the school's previous inspection in January 2009.