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19 November 2009

Mr Nigel Greathead  
Headteacher  
Manor Primary School  
Beechwood Drive  
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Dear Mr Greathead

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Manor Primary School

Following my visit with Brian Sharples HMI QA Visitor to your school on 17 and 18 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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 Wirral.

Yours sincerely  
Eileen Mulgrew  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Manor Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 November 2009

### Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work, including 9 lesson observations and 2 visits to lessons, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff, the local authority (LA) officer and members of the governing body, including the chair, the vice chair and a parent governor, and groups of pupils.

### Context

Since the inspection in June 2009 there have been some changes to the staffing structure. A member of the senior leadership team has very recently resigned from her leadership responsibilities. A member of staff is currently on sick leave and a supply teacher is taking her place.

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

Results of the 2009 Key Stage 1 national assessments show a rise in overall attainment although no pupils gained the higher level in any subject. Attainment in reading and writing rose from well below average in 2008 to below average in 2009 while in mathematics, although there was an improvement, attainment remained well below average. Outcomes (unvalidated) of the Key Stage 2 national tests were as predicted by the school with an improvement from well below in 2008 in the core subjects to below average in 2009. However, the improvement in mathematics from well below to broadly average was relatively stronger compared to English and science. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in writing for the current pupils is still low and in lessons observed the progress made by pupils was variable. This is directly linked to the quality of teaching seen in these classes. Where teaching was better pupils were expected to work hard, write at length and for a variety of reasons and progress accelerated. In less effective lessons activities were pitched too high or too low for pupils and pace was slow. This resulted in lost learning time and pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards in English, throughout the school, particularly in writing – inadequate.

### The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching and learning remains too uneven across the school and the lack of continuity in staffing still remains. The profile of teaching is not good enough to move pupils' learning on at the pace that is necessary to tackle the underachievement that persists. Local authority officers have provided training on

key aspects of classroom practice to develop the quality of teaching in the school. Consultants have met with individual teachers to discuss planning of lessons, how to assess pupils' progress and how to set appropriate targets which are understood by the pupils. The adoption of a whole-school planning format is enabling teachers to plan lessons to meet the learning needs of pupils across the ability range. However, in practice there is sometimes a gap between the planned activity and the delivery, resulting in lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils or lack of understanding by pupils who learn more slowly.

Effective lessons are characterised by practical activities which are relevant and motivate pupils to learn. Pupils taking responsibility for their learning and the effective use of questioning techniques to probe pupils' understanding supports improved progress. Less effective teaching is characterised by too much teacher direction resulting in lack of independent learning. The teachers' use of questioning techniques or the opportunities to give pupils time to think and talk things through with a partner lack the precision required to gain good progress. Too often brief answers are accepted and there are missed opportunities to challenge pupils and extend their language skills. As a result pupils lose interest, behaviour deteriorates and learning time is lost. Although the school has taken steps to encourage writing in other subjects, the ineffective use of photocopied sheets hinders pupils' opportunities for applying writing skills. In contrast the use of a photocopied sheet as a resource for the pupils to refer to in a Year 6 mathematics lesson introduced an element of real life experiences to the pupils learning.

The use of assessment to support learning has improved from the inspection in June. Pupils know what they are expected to learn because most teachers make this clear at the start of each lesson. There is still some scope to make the 'steps for success' more clearly understood by all groups of pupils. Pupils are participating more in assessing their own and classmates' work. As a result they feel much more involved in their learning and talk confidently about their targets. They can explain the process of setting the target, completing the work and identifying achievements. Many talked about the 'traffic light' system used to assess their own work which is used by the teacher to plan future work. The use of displays in each classroom, for example using kites, or horses, to capture this progress has inspired the pupils. However, they are not always sure about the next steps they need to take to improve their work or the eventual outcome.

Marking in pupils' books and folders shows recent improvement. While some is still merely appreciative, teachers are beginning a dialogue with pupils explaining what is good and how things might improve. However, this practice is not embedded throughout the school. The school recognises that this aspect of its work needs to be consistent throughout the school and has plans to review its policy on marking.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make at least satisfactory progress and continually build on their prior knowledge – inadequate.

- Improve the quality of academic guidance so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to produce better work – satisfactory.

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the inspection senior leaders and governors have united in their determination to move the school forward, respond to the actions and raise standards for the pupils in Manor. In engaging with the local authority the staff work as a team and are enthusiastic and committed in their aim to improve teaching and accelerate progress. Much work has been undertaken to establish a solid foundation on which the school can build to achieve improvement. At the time of the inspection there were four vacancies in the membership of the governing body. At the meeting with parents to discuss the inspection, two parents volunteered to take on the role of governor. This is a very positive step for the school as there is now a channel for the views of parents to be used to inform decisions on the direction of the school. Likewise the parent governors have an important role in keeping other parents informed of the developments within the school. Training has been provided for these governors. Furthermore the local authority has been instrumental in recruiting two more experienced governors to fill the vacancies. Unfortunately there has been a recent resignation of a governor but the local authority is working with the school to fill this post. Much time has been invested in reviewing policies to ensure that governors know their statutory responsibilities. New policies essential to the improvement of the school, namely on teaching and learning, and target setting, have been accepted by governors and implemented into the school. However, there has not been sufficient time for the governors to monitor the effectiveness of these policies on pupils' progress. Reports have focused on improvements to processes and governors are able to identify progress against the agreed milestones. However, assessment information on the progress of the current pupils will be presented at the end of this term and governors will evaluate the impact on pupils' attainment of any action identified in the school improvement plans.

Members of staff each have an area of the curriculum to lead. The school has prioritised the development of two members of staff in their leadership roles. There has been some monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, through 'learning walks', observations of lessons, scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. While useful points have been raised the monitoring has had limited impact on accelerating pupils learning. An analysis of previous assessments has enabled English and mathematics leaders to identify curricular targets for improvement and to set targets for the future. Although the school has started its journey for improvement it is too early to evaluate the impact on pupils' achievement.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness and knowledge of governors and subject leaders so they are able to evaluate accurately the quality of the school's

provision and take steps to raise standards and achievement – inadequate.

#### External support

Since the inspection the LA has allocated a new school improvement officer to the school; she is also an officer for the local authority. The LA has given much support to the school. This has included training for staff in aspects of classroom practice and working with the chair of governors to analyse assessment information about the school compared to the national picture. The LA's original statement of action needed some amendments and now meets requirements. Action plans are appropriately resourced and relevant and have been amended to include a two-year timeframe with 'milestones' so that the progress the school is making can be evaluated. There are clear, quantified success criteria.

#### Priorities for further improvement

The school should continue its work on the priorities identified in the June 2009 inspection.