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Mrs Amanda Anders
Headteacher
Roscoe Primary School
Alison Road
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Dear Mrs Anders

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Roscoe Primary School

Following my visit with Chris Griffin, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14 -15 December 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 July 2009. 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 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 Liverpool.

Yours sincerely

Margot D'Arcy
Lead Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Roscoe Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 14-15 December 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and members of the senior management team, pupils, governors and parents, and two representatives from the local authority.

Context

Since the inspection in July 2009, two assistant headteachers have been seconded to the school for a period of 12 months. One teacher has returned from long-term absence and two teachers are on maternity leave. A number of new governors have joined the governing body, four of whom have been appointed by the local authority.

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

Pupils' standards of attainment throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 remain below what is expected for their ages. Whilst there are pockets of improvement, overall, pupils continue to underachieve. Writing, in particular, remains an area of significant underachievement for most pupils. This picture is reflected in the most recent assessment and national test results for Years 2 and 6. The standards attained by Year 2 pupils were significantly below average, with the most notable areas of underperformance in writing and mathematics. Year 6 pupils' results were significantly below average in English, mathematics and science and are still too low.

In lessons, and in discussion with pupils, it is clear that their attitudes to learning and their interest in and enjoyment of lessons is improving. This is in response to better teaching and more varied and appealing activities and methods of working. However, such improvements are not yet consistent across the school. There are still too many lessons where slow pace, inappropriate match of work to pupils' abilities, and uninteresting work that thwart pupils' achievement and enjoyment.

The school's work to improve the quality of provision and establish reliable systems for assessing pupils' standards and tracking their progress is providing a secure foundation to address the legacy of underachievement. However, work to improve these aspects of provision is not yet embedded throughout the school and inconsistencies in practice remain. Consequently, it is too early to see the impact on pupils' outcomes. Similarly, the newness of the school's assessment and tracking systems mean that they do not yet enable the school to have a clear insight into the relative progress of different groups of pupils. The school's main focus since the inspection in July 2009 has been on the major weaknesses of writing and



mathematics, but it is aware that pupils continue to underachieve in science and is considering the best way to address this.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards and achievement in all subjects, particularly in mathematics and writing - inadequate

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils are still not sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of their education because of their low standards in basic literacy and numeracy skills. In some classes, pupils are now enjoying and responding well to opportunities to work with a partner or in a group, for example, to discuss their work or to solve problems involving money. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to cooperate in groups or to develop independent learning skills and some older pupils find it difficult to take turns in discussions. In the main, pupils continue to behave appropriately in lessons. They behave best and sustain the most interest in good quality lessons, but their concentration wanes and pupils become fidgety when the pace of lessons is slow. A recent visit by pupils to a local school with a very diverse and different pupil population to their own, improved their understanding of cultural diversity and enabled them to gain a very real sense of community, much enjoyment and a useful insight to shared values.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching remains inconsistent, but the proportion of good teaching has increased and inadequate teaching is less widespread. Nevertheless, some teaching remains inadequate and too much is no better than satisfactory. Consequently, whilst there has been improvement, the overall quality is still not good enough to move pupils on at the rate that is needed to raise standards and eradicate underachievement.

Teachers' accuracy in assessing pupils and in using assessment information is improving. Consequently, teachers are becoming more aware of the levels at which pupils are working and their rate of progress. This is beginning to have a positive impact on lesson planning, which now includes a sharper focus on adapting work to meet pupils' different needs. Generally, however, the needs of pupils who find learning more difficult are met better than those of more-able pupils. Lesson planning now reflects a greater range of activities to engage and enthuse pupils, including more practical work and more opportunities for pupils to work in groups, resulting in fewer lessons where pupils are passive learners. Learning strategies, such as 'The Steps to Success' have been devised to help pupils become more effective learners, but teachers do not always refer to these frequently enough. Whilst marking is more explicit in informing pupils how to improve, pointers for



improvement are not always followed through so their impact is still limited. Weaknesses characterising inadequate lessons and, to a lesser extent, satisfactory lessons, include the provision of work that is still inappropriately matched to pupils' needs so that, for example, more able pupils are insufficiently challenged and less-able pupils are not always given the right amount or quality of support. In varying degrees, slow pace, unexciting content, tedious recording tasks, and weak organisation and classroom management are also features of lessons that are still not effective enough in promoting successful learning for all pupils. The quality and impact of teaching assistants in supporting teaching and learning is still variable. Some support staff require far more guidance than is currently provided about how to conduct the activities they lead, including the questions to ask pupils.

Work on reviewing and improving the curriculum is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and interest in learning. The restructuring of the school day is proving very popular with pupils and enabling more productive and better distributed blocks of time for learning and a better balance between physical and other work, and recreational activities. Pupils now receive more opportunities for physical education and information and communication technology, with the latter being planned more effectively to support the development of basic skills. New initiatives, such as a daily session of 'Every Child a Writer' a recent 'Arts Week', and links with local schools and a school in India have revitalised the curriculum and pupils' enthusiasm and reduced the instances of passive learning noted at the time of the last inspection. Specific intervention programmes, delivered by trained staff, for example, to support reading skills and those with learning difficulties, are now being implemented effectively.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory or better and, in particular, provides work that meets pupils' needs and informs pupils how to improve their work - satisfactory
- improve the quality of the curriculum to take account of pupils' prior learning, engage their interests and raise their aspirations – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The effective work of the core senior leadership team of headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers and the school's partnership with the local authority are ensuring more rigour and consistency in the monitoring of teaching and learning and is establishing greater accuracy in the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' learning and progress. Whilst relatively new, the comprehensive and rigorous monitoring system that is being established is enabling clearer and more reliable evaluations of provision and helping to pinpoint where underachievement is greatest to target intervention. A review of monitoring this term has already provided useful information to enable senior managers to consider adjustments to



the organisation of teaching to make the best use of strengths in staffing. Governors' understanding of their monitoring role and their skills in evaluating the school's work are being enhanced particularly well via the expertise that has been added to the governing body. Consequently, they are gaining a much clearer understanding of the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement.

Whole-school training days have enabled all staff to agree a shared vision and understanding of the school as a professional learning community. Staff are becoming accustomed to the regularity of monitoring and are working hard to meet the increased expectations. Governors are very committed to driving forward improvements and are now sharply focused on the best ways to achieve this. The headteacher has also been successful in establishing a focused parent group and this partnership is enabling good communication and sharing ideas to support improvement. These features reflect the establishment of a common sense of purpose, but some staff are continuing to find adjusting to the increased expectations of their leadership and management roles challenging.

The school is taking a methodical, deliberate, approach to becoming compliant with the duties to promote equality of opportunity and community cohesion. A group of governors have been assigned to develop these statutory duties and a member of staff has been appointed to lead and manage community cohesion. The required equalities policies and schemes are being systematically put in place and are stemming from thorough equalities training for governors and senior managers. This is resulting in leaders having a much greater awareness of these statutory responsibilities and how to promote them.

This monitoring visit included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found them to be secure and meeting current requirements.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- increase the effectiveness of the monitoring systems to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to take swift action to tackle underperformance - satisfactory
- ensure there is a common sense of purpose among all senior leaders and staff to promote school improvement - satisfactory
- ensure that statutory requirements with regard to equality of opportunity and community cohesion are fully met – satisfactory

External support

The local authority's statement of action fulfils requirements and provides a secure basis for supporting the school's improvement. The quality and impact of the external support has been good. Effective personnel have been seconded to the school, and local authority appointed governors bring considerable expertise in



securing school improvement to the governing body. Regular visits from the School Improvement Partner and local authority representatives and a review of the school's work and progress have ensured that the school is tackling the areas for improvement appropriately.