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Mrs H Davies  
Lickhill Primary School  
Almond Way  
Stourport-on-Severn  
Worcestershire  
DY13 8UA

10 February 2010

Dear Mrs Davies

Special measures: monitoring inspection of School

Following my visit with Sheelagh Barnes, Additional Inspector, to your school on 9-10 February 2010, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.  
Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

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 the interim executive board and the Director of Children's Services for Worcestershire.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Lickhill Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 8-9 February 2010

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and senior staff, groups of pupils, a parent, the chair of the interim executive board and a representative from the local authority (LA).

## Context

The chair of the interim executive board has changed and two new members have joined the board. A new site supervisor has taken up post. One teacher is leaving at the end of this half term and a new member of staff has been appointed to start after the half term holiday, when a teaching assistant commences maternity leave.

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

This is a small school and the skills children have on joining school vary from year to year. The current group of children in Early Years Foundation Stage entered with skills broadly in line with those expected. Children make satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning. There has been a strong focus on early reading and writing. The school is aware it needs to give greater emphasis to mathematical and physical development. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment information and analysis about how well each child is progressing.

The evidence from the school's tracking and assessment of pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 show that pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress and attainment is in line with national expectations. Detailed analysis by the school has pinpointed accurately where there are weaknesses in pupils' progress, particularly in writing. The school has analysed in detail information from test papers. It has clearly identified areas of weakness which it has begun to address. It has also identified the skills and understandings which need to be developed by pupils in order to achieve the higher levels in writing. Thus, teachers now ensure that activities are planned to appropriately challenge higher attaining pupils.

The school has effectively reviewed the teaching and support provided to pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities. Good, carefully tailored support in lessons by teaching assistants enables pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in all areas.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Eliminate underachievement, raise standards and increase rates of progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 and for the most able pupils throughout the school - satisfactory.

#### Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. The management of behaviour is now consistent. Pupils are justly proud of achieving their reward stars for a whole range of roles and activities in school. The zone boards, which are used in all classes and carefully adapted for use in the Early Years Foundation Stage have had a huge impact on improvements in behaviour. Pupils are now clear about the high standards that are expected of them and on the rare occasions when there is less acceptable behaviour it is quickly dealt with. Parents have noticed the improvements in pupils' behaviour. Attendance is satisfactory, policies are applied consistently and this has begun to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time.

The school takes appropriate and swift action at all times to ensure the safety of pupils. A number of potential safeguarding issues have arisen in recent months which are being dealt with effectively by the school but these are not yet fully resolved.

Assemblies are carefully planned and contribute well to pupils' understanding of the world and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### The effectiveness of provision

Pupils can now learn. Teaching and learning have improved and are now at least satisfactory, and sometimes good or outstanding. This is because the whole ethos of the school has been turned around. Teachers' good subject knowledge is used to plan activities which interest pupils. All pupils settle quickly to learning and work confidently in small groups. Activities are planned to engage pupils from the moment they arrive in the classroom. No time is lost. Pupils concentrate well and discuss tasks with interest. In a mathematics lesson one pupil said of the activity 'it gets your brain thinking so you know you are learning'. Pupils confidently answer teachers' questions and this information is used to identify opportunities for their next steps in learning. Good support provided to teachers has improved teaching and learning. In particular a greater range of strategies is used with increasing confidence to interest and motivate pupils in lessons. Nevertheless, sometimes teachers allow activities to carry on too long and pupils' learning slows.

Teachers' lesson planning for all groups of pupils is at least satisfactory, and a great deal is good. As a result activities are appropriately matched to pupils' needs.

Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to share their learning and for the teachers to assess understanding.

Targets are now set for all pupils and pupils know when to refer to them. Marking of work is regular and positive and often has comments to promote the pupils' next steps in their learning. Opportunities to practise areas for development in pupils' work do not always follow. Pupils have begun to mark their own work and are gaining confidence and understanding of how to improve their work.

In the majority of lessons, teaching assistants are well deployed and promote the good inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but teachers' planning is not always shared with them in advance of lessons, which restricts their effectiveness.

Teachers evaluate their own teaching with increasing accuracy, but they do not reflect sufficiently on the quality of pupils' learning that is taking place. Improved assessment of this would promote better learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children have good attitudes to learning and develop good levels of concentration as a result of the opportunities they are given to choose activities which interest them. The 'Forest School' approach in the school's woodland area is greatly enjoyed by children. They take part wholeheartedly in searching for particular items or sitting on logs to discuss what they have found.

Progress since the last visit on areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, raising expectations and making sure pupils' work is challenging and matched consistently to their different starting points and capabilities - good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The impact of the headteacher's and senior team's commitment to improving teaching and learning and driving up standards is clearly evident. Monitoring of teaching is thorough and has begun to be shared by subject coordinators. They are gaining confidence in taking on their middle management role. Considerable work has taken place to build a positive environment for learning in the school. To further improve teaching and learning, monitoring needs to analyse evidence of pupils' learning. Managers at all levels support staff well and encourage a good spirit of cooperation and sharing. As a result curriculum teams are beginning to be used to support developments in the school. Parents are now better informed and the invitation to attend a recent meeting with the interim executive board was well received. Pressures with staffing have meant that the planned, regular newsletter

has not always gone out. Parents are understandably concerned. The school is aware of this and has matters in hand.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Some initiatives, such as systems to remind children that the ways they behave and work are noted by adults are already proving effective. The school is aware that it has not as yet conducted a formal evaluation of the provision. There are plans to refine procedures for collecting assessment information and to collate an induction leaflet for new staff, but these have not yet been completed.

The interim executive board continues to show strong leadership and support to the school. They hold the school to account effectively.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of collective leadership and management, which includes senior staff and governors, ensuring a more rigorous approach to monitoring and more effective tracking of pupils' progress; using assessment information rigorously to identify and eliminate the causes of underachievement – good.
- Ensure a more equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities among senior staff and evaluate the impact of their work more effectively, in relation to raising achievement – good.

#### External support

The effective high level of support of the LA is clearly seen in the improvements in teaching and learning and especially in pupils improved engagement in their learning. The growing of capacity of the school to develop its own expertise has developed from this.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- To improve learning, the monitoring of lessons needs to analyse the evidence for learning and encourage teachers to reflect on and evaluate learning outcomes.