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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 Geoff Lawrence, Additional Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 March 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 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 – 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 Tameside.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Manchester Road Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 March 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, visited 10 lessons and held meetings with the Chair of Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, staff and groups of pupils.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection in November 2009, the following changes have occurred: a seconded deputy headteacher has joined the school, the deputy headteacher is absent on long-term sick leave, four teachers have left and have been replaced by temporary teachers, a teaching assistant has left the school and is not being replaced.

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

The standards attained by pupils in English, mathematics and science remain broadly as reported at the last monitoring visit. Pupils' progress is inconsistent, particularly in Key Stage 2, where in some year groups it is inadequate. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, most children and pupils are making satisfactory progress from their starting points. Pupils are generally keen to achieve, but their progress relates directly to the quality of teaching they receive. The work in pupils' exercise books demonstrates that standards remain below average in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school's own data demonstrate that a large proportion of pupils are not on track to meet their end-of-year targets. This is because there is a legacy of underachievement in most year groups, particularly in Key Stage 2, and teaching is not consistently strong enough to eradicate it.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 – inadequate

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils still consider behaviour to be a problem. During the visit, inspectors observed some poor behaviour in lessons where teaching was inadequate. However, for the most part, in and around the school behaviour was satisfactory. The pupils recognise the positive steps taken by the headteacher to implement the new behaviour policy and they appreciate the reward system. However, they report that staff do not apply it fairly and consistently. The good standards of behaviour in the Early Years Foundation Stage remain and are extending into some parts of Key Stage 1.



Attendance has improved since the last monitoring visit. It has a higher profile and pupils are responding well to incentives.

The effectiveness of provision

Inspectors observed a range of lessons across the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 the majority of lessons were good. However, in Key Stage 2, only a very small proportion of lessons observed were good and more lessons were inadequate than satisfactory or better.

Where teaching was good, work was set with an appropriate level of challenge to match pupils' abilities. Teachers' lesson plans were clear, outlining high expectations and demonstrating an improved knowledge of the curriculum. In the better lessons, pupils worked at a good pace and the teachers used assessment well. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the more-able pupils grasped how to add five to a number easily. The teacher observed this, quickly increasing the level of challenge for these pupils by suggesting they add nine. Pupils made good progress and enjoyed their learning. Where teaching was less effective, pupils did not always understand the work, introductions to tasks were too long, the curriculum was dull and poorly matched to pupils' abilities and as a consequence, pupils' behaviour was frequently poor.

Marking is inconsistent. There are examples across the school of good practice. However, in the year groups where teaching is weak, marking, although usually frequent and encouraging, lacks rigour. Although, in the classes where marking links closely to teachers' planning and assessment tasks, pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve their work. There are still too many instances where teachers ignore the technical weaknesses in pupils' writing, particularly for the more-able. This is partly because of teachers' weak subject knowledge.

Where teaching is satisfactory or better, teachers are beginning to use assessment information about pupils' National Curriculum levels and progress well. Teachers know the levels at which pupils are working and so are providing a more appropriate level of challenge in these lessons, which is improving pupils' rate of progress.

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 – inadequate
- 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 headteacher is continuing to drive improvements and is holding staff appropriately to account for pupils' achievement. The seconded deputy headteacher and the senior leadership team are supporting him well. Leaders at all levels are gradually gaining a more accurate picture of the strengths of the school and areas needing improvement. Since the last monitoring visit, senior leaders have introduced a good system to track pupils' progress. They are using this information well to evaluate and target additional support more appropriately. The senior leadership team is beginning to relate their monitoring information more closely to pupils' progress and they now recognise the impact of the legacy of underachievement on current standards.

Teaching assistants are beginning to develop leadership roles and are taking good responsibility for pupils' health and well-being. Play leadership is developing well to broaden opportunities for pupils at lunchtimes. The extension of responsibility to include Year 5 pupils as leaders of reading is a good initiative, though in its very early stages.

Governors continue to provide a good level of challenge and support to the headteacher. They are gaining a greater insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are becoming more confident in securing external support.

The instability in staffing, particularly in Key Stage 2, is a large constraining factor on the progress the school is making overall and is disrupting the continuity to pupils' learning. Although the school is making satisfactory progress against some of the key issues identified at the last inspection, significant weaknesses in pupils' progress and in the quality of teaching and learning mean that the improvement made since the last monitoring visit is inadequate. Consequently, the school remains in a very fragile position. The progress made since being placed in special measures is inadequate.

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 local authority is providing a satisfactory level of support for the school. The secondment of the deputy headteacher and provision of human resources advice is having a positive impact. However, there has been a slow response to the significant staffing difficulties in Key Stage 2, which is contributing to the inadequate progress since the last monitoring visit.

