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Mrs Amanda Anders
Headteacher
Roscoe Primary School
Alison Road
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L13 9AD

Dear Mrs Anders

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Roscoe Primary School

Following my visit with Peter Jones, Additional Inspector, to your school on 16-17 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 second 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

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Roscoe Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 16-17 March 2010

Evidence

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

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, two teachers have returned from maternity leave and two teachers have begun maternity leave.

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

Observations of pupils' learning in English and mathematics lessons, and more comprehensive and reliable data from the school about the progress of individuals, are reflecting an improving picture in these subjects. However, the rate of learning and progress in reading, writing and mathematics is not yet consistent across the school. Standards of attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics, remain well below average and continue to limit pupils' achievement and how well prepared they are for the next stage of their education. Notwithstanding, pupils' enjoyment of learning is clearly improving. Underpinning this is the increasing success of teachers in devising lessons that capture pupils' interest and actively involve them in learning. This was exemplified particularly well in a Year 6 English lesson in which pupils were inspired to produce a witness 'recount', from the perspective of a police officer, to communicate to a court of law. The use of 'talking partners' and role play in this lesson motivated all pupils to do their best work and not a moment of learning time was lost. This continued even after the work was completed as pupils checked their writing to ensure it met the required criteria for the genre.

There has been no improvement in pupils' achievement in science. Attainment in this subject remains low. Pupils' learning and progress is highly inconsistent with, for example, marked differences in the quality and quantity of work completed, even between classes in the same year group. Pupils' attainment and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is similarly inconsistent and does not equip them well enough for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

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



Other relevant pupil outcomes

Although pupils' low standards of attainment adversely affect their future economic well-being there are some notable improvements in this area. Pupils' behaviour, including their consideration of others' views, continues to improve. Better attitudes, application and willingness to learn are also far more evident than previously and pupils are much more disposed to work effectively as part of a group. Their understanding of people's differences and cultural diversity continues to develop.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is improving and a higher proportion of good and better teaching was seen on this visit. Inconsistencies in quality remain, however, and there is still some inadequate teaching. The proportion of teaching that is satisfactory or worse is still too high to enable pupils to overcome the legacy of underachievement.

Pupils' work shows that many are benefitting from whole-school initiatives, such as 'Every Child a Writer'. Intervention programmes, for example, to raise the achievement of more-able pupils in writing, are taught very well and are having a particularly good impact on these pupils' achievement.

In the better lessons, teachers' planning is taking more account of individual pupil's needs. Planning has more evaluation of pupils' past performance and teachers use this to adapt their teaching, for example, providing more support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and more challenge for those who find learning easier. Generally, these lessons move on at a swift pace. There is less teacher-talk and more opportunities for pupils to be actively involved and take responsibility for aspects of their learning, including reviewing how well they have achieved the learning objectives or met their improvement targets. In less effective lessons, work is still not matched precisely enough to pupils' needs, being pitched more to 'middle ability' pupils. Some teachers are still finding this aspect difficult to master, with expectations of pupils being either too low or unrealistically high. Consequently, some pupils find their work too easy or too hard and do not progress well enough in relation to their capability. In some lessons, there is still a tendency for teachers to talk for too long, limiting opportunities for them to involve a wide range of pupils in answering questions or expressing views; this also restricts opportunities for ongoing assessment of pupils' learning. The quality of teaching in science remains a concern. Much of pupils' work reflects a limited focus on the development of scientific skills and too few opportunities to be actively involved in investigations. Teachers' subject knowledge in this area is not as secure as it should be.

Teachers try valiantly to use interactive whiteboard technology in their lessons, but many of these resources are now dysfunctional. Most teachers find workable alternatives, but in some cases continued use of this technology actually hamper



pupils' learning. The impact of teaching assistants, while still inconsistent, has improved. Clear direction about their role and new systems to support improved performance from these staff, including better liaison with and guidance from class teachers, is paying dividends. In a number of lessons, teaching assistants made a very valuable contribution to teaching and learning.

The school continues to review its curriculum. English and mathematics activity rooms to improve pupils' enjoyment are planned for the near future. A high quality room of this nature, based on 'letters and sounds,' has already been added to the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is proving very popular with the children and is supporting the development of their early literacy skills and promoting children's positive attitudes to reading and writing. Work that was underway to improve the outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has just been completed, enabling a better all-round curriculum for children in this phase.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, work to develop cross-curricular links and literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is continuing. Termly cross-curricular topics are improving pupils' enjoyment, as well as helping them to make relevant connections between learning in different subjects and providing opportunities to practise key skills, such as problem solving. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of a recent 'International Week' recalling that they learned much about the art, music and culture of different countries. French is also a popular subject and pupils value the additional opportunities they now have for physical education, music and the specialist tuition in dance. The success of intervention programmes to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are more able is becoming evident in the school's assessment and progress data for these groups of pupils. There are plans to improve provision in science and to promote the use of ICT across the curriculum, but there is still much work to do to address these areas.

Progress since the last visit 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 structure of a core senior leadership team of headteacher, deputy headteacher, and two assistant headteachers, is working well. The team's impact, particularly that to secure consistently high quality teaching, is becoming increasingly apparent and more clearly reflected in pupils' improved learning, behaviour, and their growing



enjoyment of school. The core leadership team's ambition and drive to improve is tangible and their work to embed this at other layers of management is beginning to pay off. The subject leaders for English and mathematics continue to develop their roles and are gaining a greater understanding of pupils' outcomes and the quality of provision in their subjects across the school. There has been less success in moving forward the leadership and management of science and, as a result, the quality of provision and pupils' achievement in this subject has not moved on.

Improvement planning, including the core leadership team's plans for addressing weaknesses in science, is, nevertheless, thorough and stems from astute evaluation of increasingly effective monitoring. Observations of teaching, analysis of pupils' work and refinements to assessment systems, which are becoming more embedded, are providing progressively more information about the quality of provision and individual pupil's performance. This growing bank of information is being used more effectively to shape improvement planning and increase the accuracy of self-evaluation. To date, the action taken to address underachievement in English and mathematics has, understandably, taken priority. The school realises that there is now an urgent need to take more decisive action to address underachievement in science and ICT.

The governing body is gaining a much more secure understanding of their role and responsibilities. The balance of challenge and support is developing well and governors are rapidly becoming key players in shaping the direction of the school. The determined focus to become not only compliant but a model of good practice in promoting equal opportunities and community cohesion is continuing.

All staff are keen to see the school removed from special measures and, to this end, are working hard to improve their practice. Most understand that the increased frequency and rigour of monitoring is a very necessary part of the process of improvement. A significant minority, however, continue to find it difficult to accept the seriousness of the school's situation and the need for regular and rigorous monitoring of their performance. Despite some overt resistance, the unswerving commitment of the headteacher, core leadership team, governors, most subject leaders and staff is ensuring that the school continues to make progress. Nevertheless, the impact of the opposition and challenge to what are essential improvement processes is limiting the school's capacity to improve, which is the key factor for removal from special measures.

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

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the areas for improvement:



- increase the effectiveness of the monitoring systems to improve teaching and learning and 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 – inadequate
- ensure that statutory requirements with regard to equality of opportunity and community cohesion are fully met - satisfactory

External support

The external support provided for the school by the local authority continues to be effective. A wide range of expertise is provided by local authority consultants and the School Improvement Partner. The support includes a rigorous and helpful review of the school's work and progress and advice from human resources on staffing issues.