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12 February 2010

Mrs Mary Langton  
Headteacher  
Appleton Primary School  
Appleton Road  
Hull  
HU5 4PG

Dear Mrs Langton

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Appleton Primary School

Following my visit with Judy Jones, Additional inspector, to your school on 10 –11 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 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 Hull.

Joy Frost  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Appleton Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 10 – 11 February 2010

### Evidence

Inspectors observed parts of 16 lessons. They scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, two groups of pupils, the School Improvement Partner and two members of the governing body. Inspectors also scrutinised the work in pupils' English books in all classes.

### Context

Since the last inspection there have been no staff changes. One assistant headteacher has returned to teach full time in the school from a part-time secondment to work for the local authority. The school has entered into a partnership with a local school and is involved in the Improving Schools Programme (ISP). An experienced local governor has joined the governing body and the local authority has increased its level of support to the school.

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

The headteacher and senior staff have taken decisive action since the last inspection to tackle the identified weaknesses. They have focused their work on improving pupils' attainment and have had some success in accelerating pupils' progress in reading across the school. This is due to improved daily guided reading sessions and much improved resources for reading. In the majority of sessions observed during the inspection, pupils made good progress because the activities closely matched pupils' abilities. There are more opportunities to read in school and at home which has led to a renewed enthusiasm for reading across the school. In writing, however, there has been less progress in developing pupils' punctuation, handwriting, spelling and general presentation in books. There has also been less progress on developing opportunities for pupils to write at length.

Much work has been done to ensure that assessments are accurate through moderation within the school, with the partner school and local authority officers. This leads to earlier identification of pupils who are falling behind or who may need extra help. Intervention strategies are supporting these pupils and are having some success in improving progress especially in Year 6. Planning for mathematics has been recently revised to include teachers' assessments and activities for three different levels of ability in each lesson. However, this new planning has not yet had time to improve pupils' progress in most year groups.

### Progress since the last inspection:

- Raise pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6, particularly in English – satisfactory.



## The effectiveness of provision

The support from the local authority through the ISP and links with a partnership school has focused on improving assessment, teaching and learning across the school and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Nursery unit has been completely overhauled with new furniture and new planning and assessments. Weekly assessments of learning are now carried out and used to plan the next week's work. The weaknesses identified in pupils' welfare have been resolved and robust risk assessments are now carried out to ensure that all children in the unit are safe at all times. New fencing and door entry buzzers have been installed and the outdoor area in both Nursery and Reception has been improved leading to a better mix of teacher-led and child-initiated activities.

During the visit by inspectors no inadequate teaching was seen and in the majority of lessons observed, pupils were making satisfactory progress. The exception was in guided reading and some mathematics lessons where there was a lively pace and a better match of activities to pupils' abilities especially for more able pupils. In these lessons pupils are given the opportunity to discuss their learning, think and reflect on what they have learnt and there is a better level of challenge resulting in better progress. In some lessons, opportunities for writing were missed because teachers talked for too long. There were some examples of good marking in pupils' books but this was inconsistent across the school and the good practice which does exist is not being shared with all staff.

- Progress since the last inspection: Improve provision and leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage – satisfactory.

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

The issues raised in the last report with regard to safeguarding procedures have been addressed as a matter of urgency and now conform to statutory requirements. The single central register is fully up to date and procedures to safeguard pupils have been improved with new fencing and security installed. Pupils' understanding of diverse communities is now better promoted through the new reading scheme, which gives pupils the opportunity to read about children from a diverse range of different cultures. In addition, visits and visitors have been planned to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding in this area.

With the support of the local authority and the partnership, school leadership and management is beginning to improve. The senior leaders now have clear roles and responsibilities and much support has been given to the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to improve the management of this area. All senior staff have or are in the process of upgrading their skills in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. Clear monitoring arrangements are in place and the assistant headteachers hold regular pupil progress meetings with all staff and pupils to check how well pupils are



doing. However, the monitoring focus of lesson observations is too narrow. It does not give the senior leaders a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school and does not enable them to draw on the good practice evident in some lessons to improve satisfactory teaching to good.

The chair of the governing body has ensured that governor training has taken place and has set up a committee to monitor pupils' progress across the school. This committee meets regularly and members are beginning to challenge the work of the school and to hold senior leaders and staff to account for the work they do.

Progress since the last inspection:

- Ensure that safeguarding procedures are secure – satisfactory.
- Ensure that leaders and managers take swift and effective action to drive school improvement – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has acted swiftly to support the school. The statement of action produced is clear and precise and the increased level of extra support is helping the school improve. Involvement in the ISP programme has improved teachers' ability to track the progress pupils are making over time more closely and support to improve the monitoring skills of the senior leaders is ongoing. The School Improvement Partner has brokered the correct support for the school to enable staff to focus their attention on the areas of weakness from the last inspection.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning to focus on how much progress pupils are making in lessons and share the good practice that exists within the school more widely.