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Mr Stuart Turner
Killamarsh Junior School
38 Sheffield Road
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Dear Mr Turner

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Killamarsh Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 29–30 June 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 June 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 – 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Killamarsh Junior School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 29–30 June 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, all other leaders, the Chair of Governing Body, the special educational needs coordinator, parents, pupils and a representative of the local authority.

Context

A Year 4 teacher has been absent through illness since December 2009. She has now resigned and will leave the school at the end of the summer term 2010. A temporary teacher has been appointed to cover her teaching duties. Another Year 4 teacher is currently taking maternity leave.

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

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics continues to improve. The school's tracking data and work in pupils' books show that most pupils in Years 3, 5 and 6 are now reaching their age-related levels in literacy and numeracy and many are exceeding them, especially in reading. Although pupils' attainment in Year 4 is rising, it remains below average in writing and mathematics. Boys' attainment in writing remains low in Years 5 and 6. However, it is rising and more boys in both these year groups are now reaching their age related levels.

Since the last monitoring inspection, pupils' progress continues to accelerate. Pupils say that lessons have become much more enjoyable and they feel that their learning has improved. The strongest improvement is in Year 4. This is because good and sometimes outstanding teaching is successfully addressing the gaps in pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, caused by previous inadequate teaching.

Observations show that pupils in Year 4 are now much more settled into classroom routines and have higher expectations of their own achievement and behaviour.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The behaviour and attitudes of most pupils continues to be good. In all lessons observed during this monitoring inspection, pupils worked together very well, helping each other with their learning when required, and showing a good level of concentration and perseverance when working independently.



The effectiveness of provision

Observations carried out by the local authority, the headteacher and those undertaken during this inspection show that the quality of teaching continues to improve. Although there is still too much teaching which is no better than satisfactory, a greater proportion of lessons is now good or better. Most teachers are using assessment information more carefully to plan what they want pupils to learn in lessons, match the work to pupils' capabilities, and guide them through the small steps which help ensure effective learning. However, this is still inconsistent. In addition, in some lessons the pace of learning is too slow because teachers talk for too long and, although the activities engage the pupils, they are not related to their learning.

In all classes, the school's own in-house training is helping teachers to improve their knowledge of National Curriculum levels of attainment. Teachers are now making more accurate assessments and are tracking pupils' progress much more rigorously. Consequently, those pupils who are not reaching their targets or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now identified early and provided with focused support.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards, particularly in English, to above the national average and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good, and ensuring there is consistent effective practice throughout the school
 - ensuring that assessment information is used effectively to set work that accurately matches the next steps in all pupils' learning
 - providing training for staff to ensure accurate grading of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science according to the National Curriculum levels – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

A major improvement is that senior leaders are now much more rigorously challenging staff on areas of underperformance. Consequently, inadequate teaching has almost been eradicated. During the monitoring inspection, the headteacher and inspector jointly observed several lessons. The headteacher's judgements about the quality of pupils' learning in lessons were accurate and he identified correctly how improvements could be made. The deputy headteacher is now giving a much stronger steer on driving improvements, especially in literacy. Although the lesson observation skills of some of the subject leaders are still in the early stages of development, their skills in data analysis and in monitoring pupils' progress through checking work in books have developed well. While the school initially increased the amount of time for leaders to carry out their leadership duties, their improved skills



have enabled them to increase the amount of time spent teaching their classes without significant weakening of the leadership and management of the school. In many of the lessons observed during this inspection, teaching assistants made a good contribution to pupils' learning in lessons.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school by:
 - increasing the amount of weekly management time for the deputy headteacher and the wider leadership team, to enable them to organise, structure and implement the monitoring, recording and evaluation of the performance of the school
 - using the information from monitoring and evaluation to address identified needs promptly and to record the outcomes
 - defining and developing the role of middle managers, subject leaders, coordinators and teaching assistants to help ensure that they have a consistently good impact on pupils' achievement and standards – good.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide a good level of guidance and has now correctly begun to reduce the amount of support for leaders and managers.

Priorities for further improvement

There are no new priorities for further improvement. The school needs to continue to improve the monitoring and evaluating skills of all leaders, and continue to develop teachers' understanding of the need to focus their planning on pupils' learning in lessons and not just on the activities undertaken.

