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1 July 2010

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 Sarah Drake, Additional Inspector, to your school on 29 and 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 January 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

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 inspection of Manchester Road Primary School

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

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, visited eight lessons and conducted two learning walks. The inspectors held meetings with a representative of the local authority, a representative of the Manchester Challenge, artists in residence, parents, staff and pupils.

## Context

Since the last monitoring inspection in March 2010 the following changes have occurred: the deputy headteacher remains absent on long-term sick leave; an additional permanent deputy headteacher has been appointed and started in the week of the inspection; two new permanent teachers have joined the school in the week before and the week of the inspection; one teacher has increased her hours to full time; and three temporary teaching assistants have joined the staff.

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

The standards attained by pupils in English and mathematics have improved. The school's unvalidated data show that pupils in Year 6 reached their targets. Pupils in Year 2 attained standards that are in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Standards in other year groups remain below national expectations, particularly in classes where there have been significant changes to staffing.

Pupils' progress remains inconsistent and relates directly to the quality of teaching they receive. Children leaving the Early Years Foundation Stage are making better progress. Staff are improving their understanding of data and consequently are planning more carefully to meet children's needs. As a result, more boys in particular are attaining the nationally expected levels for five-year-olds in communication language and literacy. In Key Stage 1, pupils are making satisfactory or better progress from their starting points. However, the starting points for some of these pupils were low. This means that some pupils, boys in particular, are working at lower than expected levels in their writing and are not well prepared for the Year 3 curriculum. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 since the last visit is variable. Where teaching is consistently strong, pupils' progress is good.

Pupils are generally keen to achieve, though in some classes disrupted by numerous staff changes, their work habits are only satisfactory. 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 there is still a large percentage of pupils not making the expected progress. This is because there is a legacy of underachievement in most year groups, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, pupils report that lessons are more interesting, they are receiving better support from teaching assistants and they are enjoying projects where they can work together in groups. Pupils say the teachers new to the school have made a good start. They know the new staff have 'high standards' and the pupils are happy because they know what is expected of them and 'the work so far has been fun'.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 – satisfactory

#### Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils say behaviour has improved. During the visit, inspectors observed good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils were polite, considerate and welcoming to visitors. They say that bullying in the main has stopped, although minor incidents still occur. They are happy that teaching staff listen to their concerns and appreciate the work of the headteacher, seconded deputy headteacher and the learning mentor in particular. Pupils were active on the playgrounds during the inspection and the range of activities provided for them has improved. However, not all pupils choose healthy options. For example, many pupils bring sugary drinks to school in their water bottles and eat unhealthy snacks during break and lunch times. In addition, few pupils eating school meals chose healthy options and were not encouraged to use the salad bar.

#### The effectiveness of provision

Inspectors observed a range of lessons across the school. These ranged from satisfactory to outstanding.

Where teaching was outstanding, work was set with an appropriate level of challenge to match individual pupils' abilities. Pupils knew the teachers' high expectations and received excellent guidance and support during the lesson to enable them to achieve well. The teachers provided a variety of activities during the lesson, which were broken into small chunks, so that pupils were active in their learning. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils were learning how to collect data on a forthcoming river walk. Each group worked well to complete tally charts and bar graphs, using carefully chosen resources to help them with spellings and information on mini-beasts. Teachers made outstanding use of



resources, such as the interactive whiteboard, to explain their expectations at the start and to refer pupils to what they needed to do midway through lessons.

Lesson planning is improving. The best plans clearly outline what the pupils will have learnt by the end of the lesson. Pupils are enjoying the more interesting curriculum, where teachers are linking subjects together through themes. This is evident in the improving quality of display around the school. Where teaching remains satisfactory, the teachers' expectations of pupils' abilities are too low. In these classes, pupils are not developing their skills, knowledge and understanding sufficiently well because teachers are providing too much information and not setting challenging enough tasks for the pupils to learn together through doing.

Marking remains inconsistent. There are pockets of good practice. However, there are still too many instances of technical errors not corrected systematically by teachers, particularly in writing activities. Pupils are not encouraged to respond to marking routinely. The school's own data are increasingly accurate. Teachers are making better use of assessment data, particularly where teaching is good and outstanding.

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 – good
- 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

Staff, parents, governors and children testify to the positive difference the headteacher and seconded deputy headteacher are making to the school. They are continuing to drive improvements and are holding staff appropriately to account for pupils' achievement. Leaders at all levels are gradually gaining a more accurate picture of the strengths of the school and areas needing improvement. Senior leaders are developing well as a team. The recently appointed permanent new staff are raising the quality of teaching and learning significantly, though they have not been in post for long enough for this to have an impact on the standards achieved by the pupils.



Governors are becoming more confident in their role and some are starting to provide a greater level of challenge. A new parent-teacher association is supporting senior leaders well, though it is at an early stage of development.

The school is starting to gain ground and strengths are becoming more evident in the quality of leadership and management and in teaching and learning. The school has made good progress since the last monitoring visit and is making satisfactory progress overall since being placed in special measures.

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 – good

External support

The local authority is providing strong support for the school and responded rapidly to the difficulties highlighted at the last monitoring visit. Recent initiatives to support the school in the appointment of new staff are effective. The headteacher is very appreciative of the good quality advice and support the school is receiving from the local authority. The Manchester Challenge is providing effective financial support by enabling the secondment of the deputy headteacher.