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20 May 2010

Mr Christopher Hassall  
Executive headteacher  
Slater Primary School  
Slater Street  
Leicester  
LE3 5AS

Dear Mr Hassall

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Slater Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 and 19 May 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 December 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 be appointed subject to the following qualifications: the mentoring arrangements are the responsibility of the partner school, and the local authority (LA) regularly checks the support for, and development of, any Newly Qualified Teachers that may 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 Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow  
Her Majesty's Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## Special measures: monitoring of Slater Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 May 2010

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the executive deputy headteacher, groups of pupils, the vice-chair of governors, a representative from the local authority, teachers and teaching assistants.

### Context

Earlier this year the governing body was disbanded and is presently in the process of being replaced by an interim executive board consisting of three governors. A very close partnership with Taylor Road Primary School has been established. This school is a National Support School. It is specifically supporting Slater Primary School by providing leadership, training and expertise to improve a range of aspects of provision.

A teacher has been appointed temporarily to the Early Years Foundation Stage. A teacher from Taylor Road Primary School is temporarily teaching in the Year 6 class.

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

While attainment across the school remains low, progress since the last inspection has accelerated in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Years 5 and 6 the acceleration has been more rapid than in other years so that the gap between the school's standards and national expectations is narrowing. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been slower because of staffing instability since the last inspection. Recently, staffing has stabilised.

Progress has accelerated because of an improvement in teaching. In lessons, pupils no longer take a passive role but are actively engaged in their learning. For example, in an English lesson pupils worked in pairs to help each other to perfect their skills when reading a poem aloud. Pupils report that they enjoy their greater involvement in their learning. Teachers have improved their ability to use assessment information to group pupils by ability. However, in each group there are pupils who do not make as much progress as they could because the work is not pitched accurately to meet their needs. For the first time, assessment information is now being gathered accurately because of a much improved tracking system. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from homes where English is not the first language are receiving additional help that is enabling them to make better progress than they were. However, at this stage, pupils in these groups do not make as much progress as they could because there is presently insufficient assessment information to tailor interventions specifically to their needs.



Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 by improving the quality of teaching, raising expectations, introducing robust assessment procedures, reinforcing basic skills in other subjects, modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those from homes where English is not the first language and promoting enjoyment in learning – satisfactory.

### Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour in lessons has improved and is good. This is because pupils' active involvement in lessons is giving them the opportunity to demonstrate good cooperation skills and a greater responsibility for their work. Pupils' contribution to the community was judged inadequate, but is improving. By re-instating the school council, pupils are beginning to have an influence on improvements to provision. For example, following the recommendations from pupils, new after-school clubs are being provided and the playgrounds are being improved.

### The effectiveness of provision

The proportion of inadequate teaching in English and mathematics lessons has reduced considerably since the last inspection. This is because of intensive mentoring support from teachers in the partner school and rigorous monitoring and evaluation by school leaders. Improvements such as in planning and a more structured English curriculum are resulting in a greater consistency in the quality of teaching. However, these improvements are insufficiently embedded for some teachers so that they are not yet equipped to improve their teaching independently without the continued support from their mentors. The school has rightly concentrated on improving teaching and the curriculum in English and mathematics lessons and has not yet had the time to establish cross-curricular links with other subjects.

The school has established effective induction procedures for pupils and new staff. Pupils new to the school and their families now benefit from the 'friendly face' initiative. A well trained teaching assistant provides a positive welcome and pupils benefit from a secure, structured start to their education in the school. Positive initiatives to reward pupils who attend regularly and robust sanctions that ensure that parents and carers take responsibility for their children's attendance are bearing fruit. While the attendance of some pupils remains low, overall it has risen considerably since the inspection.

The care, guidance and support of vulnerable pupils have improved because of the effective procedures that have been introduced by the school. Productive working relationships are established with outside agencies to check regularly the development and care for these pupils. The school has successfully addressed all the



health and safety issues identified by the authority at the time of the inspection. The final action is to be the planned resurfacing of the playgrounds this summer holiday. A recent fire risk assessment has identified a number of areas in the school that need immediate improvement. The school and the LA are rightly concerned that these need to be rectified as soon as possible.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils by introducing effective induction procedures and taking a rigorous approach to promoting regular attendance – good.
- Strengthen arrangements for securing pupils' welfare, health and safety by taking action to rectify health and safety issues identified by the authority and by introducing effective systems to identify, support and record the progress of vulnerable pupils – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school's capacity for improvement is strengthening because of the highly effective leadership provided by the executive headteacher and deputy headteacher. Clearly identified priorities for improvement have been established through the rigorous procedures employed to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Consequently, this has resulted in the improvements in teaching, the rise in attendance and the acceleration in pupils' progress. Teachers have benefitted from intensive training and support, and currently morale is high. They demonstrate a resolute determination to improve their work. The excellent partnership with Taylor Road Primary School has been instrumental to these improvements. For example, the buddy system in which teachers from each school are paired is having the greatest impact on the improvements observed in teaching.

The school leaders have correctly identified that, at this time, teachers are not equipped to take on extra leadership responsibilities. Staff from the partner school have successfully compensated for this so that the quality of provision does not decline further. Governance is stabilising and the three very experienced appointed governors who will make up the interim executive board demonstrate a clear understanding of the steps that need to be taken to secure the future for this school.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve leadership, management and governance by embedding ambition, introducing rigorous procedures for checking on standards and quality, equipping leaders to improve teaching and learning and ensuring that governance is effective – good.

External support

The support from the LA has been satisfactory. The LA has made the requested improvements to the statement of action so that it is a more useful working



document. Past weaknesses when supporting and challenging the school have now been overcome so that since the inspection the school has benefitted from good strategic support from the LA. However, some important steps still need to be taken in order to secure the future of this school, such as the decision to establish a hard federation with its partner school. In addition, personnel and health and safety issues that hamper the school's development have yet to be resolved.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Take the immediate recommended actions and those that have to be carried out within three months in the fire risk assessment by the time of the next visit.
- Ensure that teachers are well equipped to deliver high quality lessons independently by embedding the recent improvements to teaching.
- Use assessment information better to pitch work accurately at the correct level for all pupils and to tailor more precisely the interventions for different groups.

