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16 September 2010

Mrs Dawn Liversidge  
Headteacher  
Earby Springfield Primary School  
Bailey Street  
Earby  
Barnoldswick  
Lancashire  
BB18 6SJ

Dear Mrs Liversidge

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Earby Springfield Primary School

Following my visit with David Byrne, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 September 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. 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 the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Sonya Williamson  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010

- Raise attainment to the national average by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations of pupils' abilities and that the targets for which pupils strive reflect this
  - planning and delivering lessons and activities which take into account the full range of pupils' needs, interests and abilities
  - developing teaching strategies that promote good achievement
  - developing effective strategies to identify and support pupils quickly if they begin to underachieve
  - developing the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so it better reflects the full range of children's needs and interests.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels have greater impact on the school's effectiveness by:
  - ensuring that the governing body understands and fulfils all statutory responsibilities, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils' well-being and equalities
  - prioritising actions for school improvement and agreeing measurable success criteria
  - increasing the rigour of the systems that monitor and evaluate the impact of actions on provision and outcomes
  - making expectations clear and accountability rigorous
  - nurturing the potential of senior and middle leaders through well-targeted professional development
  - increasing the rigour with which the governing body holds the school to account for its performance.
- Strengthen other areas of provision by:
  - reversing the downward trend in attendance through carefully targeted intervention involving pupils and their parents and carers
  - developing a clear communication and engagement strategy with parents and carers so they develop confidence in the work of the school
  - setting clear guidelines for all staff regarding safeguarding and the reporting of incidents.

Special measures: monitoring of Earby Springfield Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 14 and 15 September 2010

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, seconded deputy headteacher, subject coordinators and other staff, two groups of pupils, parents and carers, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

## Context

Numbers on roll have reduced slightly since the time of the previous inspection. There have been some staffing changes. Two senior members of staff, who had been on phased return after long-term periods of absence, have returned to school. Two teachers left the school at the end of the summer term and a new teacher has been appointed. The acting deputy headteacher, who had recently been seconded to the school at the time of the previous inspection, is working at the school for three days each week as a member of the senior management team.

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

The most recent national test results indicate that pupils' attainment remains below the national average at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Writing remains an area of relative weakness across the school. In English, mathematics and science far too few pupils attained Level 3 by the end of Key Stage 1 or Level 5 by the end of Key Stage 2. However, although rates of progress vary greatly between classes, overall progress has improved and the downward trend in attainment has been reversed. Teacher assessments indicate that some pupils have made strong gains in their learning in response to effective teaching and closer tracking of pupils' attainment. The appropriate targets that were set for pupils in Year 6 in relation to the proportion of pupils who should attain Level 4 or above in English and mathematics in the national tests were exceeded.

In the best lessons observed, pupils developed what they knew, understood and could do well because teachers had good subject knowledge, asked probing targeted questions and set pupils different learning tasks well linked to their needs and abilities. In one effective reading session, a group of higher-attaining pupils achieved good gains in comprehension and historical knowledge as well as how to improve their writing because of the teacher's focused planning. Learning was slowest when the tasks set for all groups of pupils were too similar, where there was insufficient focus on key vocabulary and opportunities were lost to make links between aspects of learning. Although the tracking of overall pupils' progress is accurate, it is not yet being used consistently and effectively to inform teachers' planning. In addition, the

information gained from assessment indicates pupils' attainment but does not indicate what their emerging strengths and weaknesses are within different aspects of a subject. The lack of this information limits the use of personalised targets for pupils and has a negative impact on their rates of progress.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- raise attainment to the national average – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils say they are happy at school. The large majority of pupils engage conscientiously and behave appropriately in their lessons. Pupils respond most positively when teachers have high expectations of them in terms of their learning and their behaviour. This was demonstrated in a mathematics lesson when pupils concentrated, achieved well and enjoyed their success in finding the differences between numbers because the levels of challenge were high for each group of pupils. They were aptly supported and they knew the high standards of behaviour that were expected.

The downward trend in attendance has been successfully reversed since the last inspection. The school has increased the rigour with which it tracks absence. Pupils are responsive to the enhanced systems used to reward good attendance. The school has improved its communication with parents and carers about the links between good attendance and improved progress for pupils. It holds parents and carers to account more closely when their child's absence is giving cause for concern or when holidays are requested during term time. Joint working with the local authority parent liaison officer has paid dividends. The improved attainment and attendance of pupils is having a positive impact on the extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- reverse the downward trend in attendance – good

The effectiveness of provision

The staffing changes since the previous inspection mean that the school has a more stable staff team. Inadequate, satisfactory and good lessons were observed but overall improvements are evident and staff are working very hard to engage with the professional advice being provided by the local authority advisors and consultants and the acting deputy headteacher. The majority of teachers have appropriate expectations of what middle- and lower-attaining pupils might achieve, but the work they set and the questions they pose for higher-attaining pupils are not consistently or sufficiently stretching pupils' learning.

Teachers are not yet routinely grouping pupils in relation to their abilities in different subjects. They are beginning to use strategies to assess pupils' understanding during lessons but the information is not yet being used to set individual or group targets for pupils or to inform future lesson planning. The curriculum is not yet being fully adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.

Support staff are running intervention groups for identified pupils, for example, those who are falling behind expectations in their writing. However, interventions are not begun promptly enough and pupils do not clearly understand the purpose of some interventions. School data indicates that too few pupils who have received interventions have made progress with their attainment. Teachers are not yet using information about underachievement to focus their planning on ensuring the needs of the identified pupils are being addressed. Consequently, pupils are unsure of their specific learning targets. They say they would like to know what the next steps in their learning should be and to be supported with them. Teachers are beginning to encourage pupils to evaluate how well they understood the overall lesson objectives, but pupils are not yet being fully assessed against specific success criteria that celebrate what they know, understand and can do.

Teachers generally manage their classrooms well and transitions between activities are well organised so that learning time is not lost. Routines have been well established right from the start of term. However, teachers use a narrow range of teaching and learning styles. Pupils have too few opportunities for active group work, to instigate and follow enquiries and investigations or to use information and communication technology to support their learning.

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage remains inadequate despite the intensive support strategies that have been put in place by the local authority. Issues identified at the previous inspection remain. The learning environment lacks structure and vibrancy. Resources limit some aspects of learning. Teaching is inadequate because expectations of what children can do are too low and insufficient emphasis is placed on planning for continuous provision between the indoor and outdoor areas.

Progress on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations of pupils and ensuring teaching is better matched to pupils' needs, interests and abilities – satisfactory
- develop strategies to identify and support pupils who fall behind – inadequate
- develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage – inadequate

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

Training provided by the local authority has enabled the governing body to question and probe more effectively in its discussions with the headteacher and the local authority. It takes less for granted and more frequently takes the initiative. Although there has been some improvement in the governing body's understanding of its different roles, it is not yet sufficiently proactive in carrying them out or asking for evidence to ensure accountability at all levels of school leadership. This is reflected in the way that performance management systems have not been fully operational in the last academic year.

The governing body has ensured that it is now fulfilling its basic safeguarding responsibilities. There have been improvements with regard to child protection arrangements, the recording of accidents, the site fencing and the analysis of incidents to inform future planning. Pupils say they feel safe overall and that they would always report worries to a teacher, although they are less confident that playground concerns reported at lunchtimes would be fully addressed.

The headteacher, working with the local authority support team and the School Improvement Partner, has ensured that systems are in place for monitoring the progress of actions identified in the improvement plan. The use of joint observations between staff and with the local authority consultants has been a particularly strong feature in helping to strengthen teaching. However, the outcomes from the range of monitoring are not fully evaluated so that the key points can be disseminated to all the staff and subsequent required actions and responsibilities determined. Monitoring is too focused on the quality of provision rather than on pupils' learning outcomes.

The headteacher has worked collaboratively with the staff to develop a new mission statement for the school but, despite this, there is a lack of strategic direction. Senior and middle leadership roles within the school have been appropriately allocated for the start of the academic year but there is too little clarity about expectations and responsibilities even among staff who are well established. Communication systems within the school are poor. Senior leaders are not taking the lead in modelling best practice in planning, teaching and monitoring. Where staff have strengths in particular aspects of their teaching, this is not being shared to help raise staff morale. Staff meetings and senior leadership team meetings are not rigorously focused on raising pupils' attainment and discussions do not lead to identified actions or next steps. Professional development for teachers, provided by the local authority both within school and through links with a partner school, is relevant but it is not aptly built upon so that staff are left not knowing what they must do next and what checks will be made. Neither are the outcomes from monitoring and evaluation used to personalise sufficiently the further professional development that might benefit staff.

The school has taken positive steps to improve its partnership with parents and carers. Many of the strategies used to reverse the downward trend in attendance have resulted in closer relationships with parents and carers. The Friday information letters are informative and well presented. Parents and carers have received additional information about the curriculum planned for the coming weeks and how they might contribute to their child's learning through family activities and collaborative home learning tasks. Nevertheless, more remains to be done to engage parents and carers at the start and end of the day, notably in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Questionnaires used by the school indicate that parents and carers are largely satisfied or pleased with the school's work.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure the governing body fulfils its responsibilities and rigorously holds the school to account – satisfactory
- improve systems for and the impact of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning – satisfactory
- improve the impact of senior and middle leadership through clarifying expectations, targeting professional development and ensuring accountability – inadequate
- strengthen safeguarding procedures – satisfactory
- improve partnerships with parents and carers – satisfactory

External support

The local authority has provided satisfactory support to the school since it was made subject to special measures. The impact of the actions contained in the local authority statement of action has been to ensure that the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the areas for improvement. It has built on the support that it was already providing and has given good support for the management of staffing. The school has worked with the local authority to produce an appropriate and agreed improvement plan. The plan focuses well on most areas identified for improvement but has too little emphasis on strategies to strengthen governance and develop relationships with parents and carers. Although the plan includes relevant success criteria they are not sufficiently well expressed as specific measurable targets for increases in pupils' attainment. Time scales and responsibilities are set but they are too broad in scope and not closely linked to specific actions and associated monitoring activities so that accountability is clear.