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22 September 2010

Mr David Thomas  
St Weonard's Primary School  
Mount Way  
St Weonard's  
Hereford  
HR2 8NU

Dear Mr Thomas

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Weonard's Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Tuesday 21 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 visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures 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 governors and the Director of Children's Services for Herefordshire.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector



## Annex

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

- With immediate effect, meet requirements for keeping pupils safe and ensure that all pupils feel safe by:
  - ensuring all pupils' concerns are taken seriously and acted upon
  - providing more ways in which pupils can alert staff to their concerns
  - carrying out the required risk assessments
  - ensuring there are sufficient staff on duty at the after-school club.
- Eliminate inadequate teaching and improve pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of their pupils' capabilities so they are given more demanding tasks
  - making better use of assessment information to match tasks to pupils' abilities
  - ensuring pupils spend less time listening to the teacher and more time actively engaged in their learning.
- Improve the quality of self-evaluation by:
  - carrying out more frequent monitoring to clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, so that strengths can be built upon
  - ensuring the governing body has all information necessary for it to monitor the school's performance and challenge the school's senior management
  - using the data on pupils' progress to ensure staff are held accountable for the standards achieved in their classes.



## Special measures: monitoring of St Weonard's Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on Tuesday 21 September 2010

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met the headteacher, groups of pupils, a group of governors and a representative from the local authority.

### Context

Since the inspection, the school has appointed two new governors. A part-time member of staff has also been appointed to reduce the teaching commitment of the headteacher, who now teaches just under half the time. The after-school club has been closed. The headteacher and local authority adviser attended a school improvement seminar in Bristol in July 2010.

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

Children generally enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge in line with those expected for their age.

Standards in English and mathematics are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and unvalidated Key Stage 2 test results for 2010 show significant improvements to standards, particularly in mathematics. The proportion of pupils who attained Level 5 in the mathematics tests has risen from 18% to 63%. The school has two different systems to track the progress of pupils and early indications show that they are making better progress than at the time of the inspection. This is confirmed by observations of lessons and pupils' work.

Support from the local authority consultants has ensured that teachers have more accurate assessments of the level at which pupils are working. Pupils have individual targets for subjects but these are not sufficiently challenging.

The small number of pupils in each class ensures that staff have an effective overview of pupils who are identified as needing additional support for their special educational needs.

### Other relevant pupil outcomes

Many elements of pupils' personal development and well-being continue to be good. It was impressive to see how many pupils enjoyed fruit from the school's kitchens at morning break and also how proud some were of the apples from the school's trees which are available after lunch. Behaviour observed was generally good but at times



some pupils were restless in lessons, especially when they had finished their work. Pupils are polite and friendly. They say that they have a better understanding of issues regarding bullying and they feel safer and now know what to do if they have any concerns. They commented that they have confidence in staff taking concerns seriously and acting quickly. This was also confirmed by the school's questionnaire completed by older pupils.

Attendance fell slightly in the previous year and remains broadly average. Whilst pupils generally enjoy their learning, their attention and concentration sometimes wavers when the pace of lessons is slower.

### The effectiveness of provision

Teaching observed during the visit was judged to be at least satisfactory, with some good elements. However, some lessons lacked sufficient challenge for differing ability groups of pupils. Lesson plans identified different work for different groups but this was often based around the extent to which pupils completed tasks or the support available, rather than the complexity of the tasks. Questioning techniques have improved and teachers have responded well to support in improving their use of open questions to elicit better responses from pupils.

Teachers set, and share, learning objectives for each lesson, often by having them already printed and stuck into pupils' books so that time is not wasted. Good relationships are a strong feature of the lessons seen, and teaching assistants provide appropriate support, including recording children's responses when involved in whole class inputs and then taking the youngest children outside to work.

Teachers provide written praise and encouragement or advice on how to improve when marking pupils' books. This often informs pupils on how well they are doing although at times the language used is complex and not readily understood by younger pupils.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy their learning and they have settled in well at the start of term. All areas of the curriculum are suitably covered, with adult-led activities and opportunities for the children to choose activities for themselves including the use of the well-appointed outside area.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- Eliminate inadequate teaching and improve pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6  
– satisfactory

### The effectiveness of leadership and management



The school has acted decisively to overcome the safeguarding issues identified within the inspection. Good support has been provided so that pupils of all ages now feel secure and any incidents of bullying can be quickly identified, reported and rectified. In conjunction with the health and safety officer from the local authority, all risk assessments have been reviewed and now comply with current expectations. Issues about the staffing levels at the after-school club have been remedied by closing this facility. As such, this issue will not be reported on again, unless it reopens.

The headteacher has made a significant start to improving the leadership and management of the school. He has established a plan to monitor the work of the school but as yet he has not had the time to implement this and gain an accurate overview of the key areas. Hence, he has not been able to provide the governing body with appropriate information for them to have an accurate appraisal of how well the school is progressing. There have been limited opportunities to involve other staff in monitoring the work of the school.

Governance is improving with governors having a better understanding of what needs to be improved and how they can ensure that developments are on track. There is still a significant degree of disappointment among some members of the governing body who feel let down by elements of the local authority prior to the school becoming subject to special measures. The recent training by the local authority, on the interpretation of elements of school data, was well received. Governors also expressed concern that they do not always all get timely information regarding meetings which identify how well the school is addressing the issues from the previous report.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- With immediate effect, meet requirements for keeping pupils safe and ensure that all pupils feel safe – good
- Improve the quality of self-evaluation – inadequate

### External support

The local authority's statement of action is good. It provides a sound framework for further improvement, including suitable support from advisers and subject consultants, although teachers are sometimes confused between the different advice they are getting on what constitutes good teaching. The local authority's commentary explains how the school's progress will be monitored and evaluated. The School Improvement Partner, who is a full-time employee of the local authority, works directly with the headteacher to develop the capacity of the school. She has built up a very good professional relationship with the school's management. The local authority, School Improvement Partner, advisers and consultants monitor the work of the school to ensure improvement actions are undertaken effectively and to evaluate the impact of interventions.



The school has been paired with another local school to share good practice with regards to safeguarding and received effective support from the local authority health and safety officer. The governing body has received support on how to analyse examination and test information and to ensure it understands its role as a critical friend and its statutory responsibilities.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the target setting procedures so that individual targets are more challenging.
- Amalgamate the different systems used to track pupils' progress so that procedures are coherent and readily identify how well pupils are progressing towards their targets.

