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25 November 2011

Mrs Terry Cefai Executive Headteacher and Mr Alun Evans Acting Headteacher  
Applegarth Junior School  
Bygrove  
Fieldway  
New Addington  
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CR0 9DL

Dear Mrs Cefai and Mr Evans

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Applegarth Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 and 24 November 2011, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is 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

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 Croydon Council.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- By 2012, raise attainment so that 80% of pupils reach age-related expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - improving the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make up for previous slower progress
  - using whole-school assessment information to improve the quality of lesson planning and provide pupils with an understanding about how they can improve and where support should be targeted
  - improving the quality of marking and use target setting more effectively
  - improving pupils' presentation skills to help raise their expectations about what constitutes their best work and their aspirations for the future.
- Develop the expertise of all leaders by:
  - involving all leaders in analysing aspects of the school's work to determine the strengths and weaknesses within classes, subjects and for groups of pupils
  - drafting a realistic school improvement plan in which success can be measured, enabling leaders to review and be held accountable for the outcomes of initiatives
  - ensuring there is rapid and effective action to eliminate any weaknesses in teaching and any underachievement in learning.
- By 2011, produce a sustainable and realistic plan, with success criteria, for whole-school improvement that focuses clearly on raising attainment and ensures pupils make improved progress.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Applegarth Junior School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 23–24 November 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Executive headteacher, acting headteacher and senior school leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since September 2011, two newly qualified teachers have been appointed to the school. The governing body is set to appoint an interim headteacher who will start at the school in January 2012. The appointment is being made for one year.

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

Pupils' attainment has improved in 2011. In English, pupils met the nationally expected age-related levels of attainment, although mathematics was marginally below the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved high grades in these subjects remained significantly below those seen nationally. Overall in this year, pupils made inadequate progress in their learning, although it was satisfactory in English. The school's current comparison of performance for most year groups is showing that pupils are gaining ground on previous underachievement. Good and increasing opportunities exist for pupils to assess their performance in lessons and to contribute to peer evaluation of their performance. There is good encouragement by teachers for pupils to work together and discuss tasks set and they are using these opportunities well. In a mathematics lesson, pupils used group discussion well to solve quite complex tasks. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of their attainment targets and how well they are achieving them especially pupils in Years 5 and 6.

#### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils say they enjoy school and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good. The level of attendance remained above average at the end of 2011 and data for the first term is indicating that the school is set to maintain this. Pupils' make good choices about how they maintain a healthy lifestyle during their time at school; many prefer fruit to muffins as a snack at break time. The extra responsibilities created by the school have been well received by pupils. Ambassadors are proud to greet guests entering their classrooms and provide good explanations of the lessons they are undertaking. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their lives in assemblies and to build on the aspirations of what they want to achieve in different aspects of their life, for example in music.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

Although good measures have been implemented by senior leaders, they are yet to have the full impact on raising the quality of teaching and assessment in the school. The quality of lessons remains similar to that seen at the last monitoring inspection, with a small proportion of better lessons seen. Teachers are planning lessons well and demonstrating that they know the needs of their pupils. There has been significant progress in teachers developing a culture that enables pupils to assess their learning. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers talked for too long, limiting the time pupils had to complete their tasks, and as a result progress slowed. There were few examples seen where more able pupils were given opportunities to work independently. There were good examples of a few teachers using high-level questions to stretch pupils' learning and develop their skills of analysis and evaluation in a few lessons. However, this did not occur in the majority of lessons. A few lessons involved teachers providing closed questions that limited pupils' responses and inhibited the teachers' ability to understand how well pupils were learning. The quality of marked work has improved and there are more instances of detailed feedback in books which identify good 'next-steps', allowing pupils to build on their learning. Pupils are generally responding well to this. Teaching assistants are working well to support learning in lessons, especially for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some are taking good initiatives to support pupils' learning when they are stuck in their tasks.

The increased opportunities to develop pupils' writing are now being seen in lessons. The cross-curriculum initiatives are having good impact on developing pupils' interest and deepen their understanding of different faiths and cultures. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils in Year 5 discussed the origins of Diwali, the festival of light, and developed a piece of descriptive writing. In a design and technology lesson, pupils in the same year group were taught the significance of Rangoli patterns in the Hindu religion; the task included developing their own Rangoli pattern design. Different topics are planned for each term, although the full impact and effectiveness of these initiatives are yet to be determined.

The good monitoring of pupils' attainment allows the school to support pupils at risk of underachieving. Pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties are supported extremely well. The good support from external agencies contributes effectively to enabling the very few pupils with severe behavioural problems to work well with their peers.

### *Judgement*

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:  
By 2012 raise attainment so that 80% of pupils reach age-related expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics – satisfactory.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The executive headteacher and acting headteacher are focusing their actions on improving teaching and pupils' attainment. Other senior leaders are contributing well to whole-school improvement, especially in improving pupils' literacy levels and developing opportunities for pupils to improve their writing in subjects other than English. These senior leaders are now part of the monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching in the school. They have a good understanding of where the weaknesses remain in teaching and are securing improvements, especially in the quality of marked work. Good professional development opportunities and modelling of good practice have been undertaken, which has improved some very weak teaching. Many teachers are demonstrating they can provide a more secure level of written assessment. There is good support for the two newly qualified teachers to improve their teaching practice. Robust targets set for teachers in their annual performance reviews are linked to pupils' achieving their attainment targets. The good process of monitoring pupils' performance is resulting in timely actions to improve underachievement of groups and individuals identified. The whole-school assessment information is readily available to teachers; this has resulted in teachers having good data to plan for the needs of pupils in lessons and a good understanding of the progress pupils and groups of pupils are making.

The school's improvement plan is realistic but yet challenging in its targets. However, it does not identify the school's projected improvement over a long period of time. Members of the governing body have worked swiftly to ensure that they fully discharge statutory duties. They are knowledgeable of the school's challenges and are tireless in their efforts to support the school. They are using a variety of strategies to increase the engagement of parents and carers as numbers attending formal meetings have been low.

### *Judgement*

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:  
Develop the expertise of all leaders – satisfactory.

By 2011, produce a sustainable and realistic plan, with success criteria, for whole-school improvement that focuses clearly on raising attainment and ensures pupils make improved progress – satisfactory

## **External support**

There remains significant intervention and support for the school by the executive headteacher; this has not reduced since the last monitoring inspection. The local authority is sufficiently responsive to the needs of the school. Good regular monitoring ensures the local authority is up to date and fully informed of the progress the school is making.