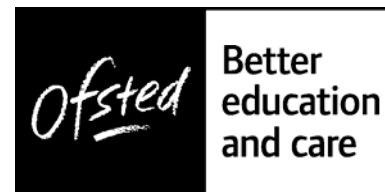


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14 June 2005

Mrs L M Chappell  
Headteacher  
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Lincolnshire  
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Dear Mrs Chappell

### **Implementation of Gedney Hill CE Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Martin Cragg HMI and Adrian Gray HMI to your school on 8 and 9 June 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the quality of the action plan; the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school's action plan is satisfactory overall with some weaknesses.

The weaknesses outlined in the second paragraph of the note of the inspection findings should be addressed and amendments prepared by the second monitoring inspection.

The LEA's statement of action is good.

The school has made limited progress since being subject to special measures.

The LEA's target date of summer term 2006 for the removal of special measures is realistic.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for Lincolnshire and the Diocese of Lincoln. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF GEDNEY HILL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit 12 lessons or parts of lessons, two registration sessions and two assemblies were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, literacy subject leader, chair of governors and school improvement officer. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and representatives from the school improvement service and Diocese of Lincoln.

The school's action plan addresses the areas for improvement from the inspection report, although the six areas have been condensed into four. The areas for improvement which do not have a discrete section in the plan are not easy to track and need further emphasis. Otherwise, the proposed actions are clear and specific. The plan clearly identifies those responsible for ensuring the action takes place. Timescales, with start and finish dates, are clearly and appropriately identified. Success criteria against which progress can be judged are expressed mainly in qualitative terms and lack sufficient quantitative measures. The plan makes clear who will monitor and evaluate progress. However, on occasions, the headteacher is responsible for leading and evaluating action, which is inappropriate. The resources to support the implementation of the plan are clearly identified and allocated to sources of funding.

The LEA has no plans to close the school. The commentary concludes that the school's plan covers the areas for improvement. Two additional governors with relevant experience have been appointed by the LEA. Support has also been provided by seconding an experienced teacher for six months to act as deputy headteacher and to release the headteacher from teaching duties. The LEA plan identifies key personnel to support the headteacher, teachers and governors in achieving the outcomes specified in the plan. The resource costs to the LEA are clearly identified. There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's progress. However, where the school's success criteria are used, note should be taken of any changes made to the school's plan to provide more quantitative measures.

At Key Stage 1, when compared with national data for 2004, the school's results are in the lowest quarter of all schools for reading, writing and mathematics. Although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 improved on 2003 in reading from 67 per cent to 72 per cent and in mathematics from 67 per cent to 78 per cent, in writing it fell from 75 per cent to 61 per cent. The school's overall trend of results is falling and below the national trend. Boys perform significantly less well than girls in comparison to national averages.

At Key Stage 2, when compared with 2003, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and above in the 2004 tests rose significantly in English from 50 per cent to 72 per cent, fell slightly in mathematics from 71 per cent to 67 per cent and remained the same in science. When compared with the national data for 2004, the school's results are in the lowest 40 per cent of schools nationally and of schools with similar prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

Pupils' results in unaided writing assessments show more rapid improvement in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. The most recent assessment indicates improvement in Key Stage 2 with the exception of Year 5. In mathematics, according to the most recent assessment, Years 5 and 6 are making slower progress than other years. Standards remain below national expectations.

Staff absence and resignations has led to considerable instability in the teaching of individual classes; at the time of the inspection, classes were being taught by a newly qualified teacher, the acting deputy headteacher, a supply teacher and a recently qualified teacher. One member of staff has been absent for nine months.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in nine of the lessons observed, including four in which it was good; it was unsatisfactory in three, all of which were in Key Stage 2. At present there is too little sustained good teaching to have a significant impact on pupils' standards.

In the best lessons, teaching set a good pace and included secure classroom management. Good use was made of teaching assistants to manage groups and promote appropriately challenging and productive activity. The pupils were provided with interesting resources which engaged their attention. The management of the pupils was firm but friendly and clear expectations of behaviour were set. Sound use was made of the classroom as a learning environment; there was much good display work in evidence. Pupils' formal talk was actively encouraged and they were prompted to justify or explain their oral answers, with a clear emphasis on the use of key terms.

The characteristics of the weaker teaching included: activities which were not well matched to the needs of all of the pupils; a lack of clarity about the progression of skills in a range of subjects; weak use of resources to stimulate learning; insufficient use of question and answer work to develop pupils' understanding in whole-class situations and errors by staff in punctuation or spelling. In these lessons, teachers did not define the quality of work they were expecting and did not insist on high standards; for example, pupils made errors in copying out key words which were not corrected. Much of the planning seen was unsatisfactory; the reliance on weekly planning means that some teachers do not always have a clear grasp on time management or objectives in individual lessons.

The quality of learning matched the teaching. Learning was good when teachers placed clear emphasis on the lesson objectives and the key terms to be used; pupils quickly understood the purpose of these words and used them in talking

about their work. The small group sizes were well used to involve all individuals, with some good work by teaching assistants. Pupils' learning was most evidently weak when they were not being challenged sufficiently.

Assessment and marking practice were good in one of the younger classes, particularly because of the quality of dialogue between the teacher and the pupils. Class and individual targets have been introduced for the older pupils very recently; most pupils cannot relate their progress to National Curriculum levels and thus have no standard by which to evaluate their own progress. Teachers do not refer to these standards in their teaching and consequently the pupils do not have an understanding of the progressive development of their skills. Very detailed and informative marking was a feature of one class, but some pupils lacked the skills to respond to the advice they were being offered.

The pupils' personal development, including their attitudes and behaviour, was satisfactory in 11 lessons. They were good in only four. Although behaviour was generally satisfactory, there were instances when individuals did not readily conform to basic expectations. Pupils' attitudes to their own learning were rarely enthusiastic; many pupils completed tasks perfunctorily and without enthusiasm, although they responded with much greater interest when provided with appropriate stimulus.

Behaviour around the school and during the two assemblies was good. The pupils responded well to the range of lunchtime activities and contributed effectively to two successful assemblies. There have been two short and one long fixed-term exclusions over the last nine months.

Attendance over the school year so far is approximately 94.5 per cent; there has been a gradual improvement during the year. In 2003-4 it was below the national figure, but the recent improvement means that current attendance is now in line with the national average.

The school has faced significant changes to staffing in the last year. However, the secondment of an experienced teacher to be acting deputy headteacher has strengthened teaching and provided important management support for the headteacher. This arrangement finishes at the end of the summer term.

The headteacher is creating a sense of trust and teamwork in the school. Staff confidence and morale are improving and there is growing commitment by all to improving the school. The headteacher has successfully established a small number of key initiatives which have encouraged teachers and teaching assistants to work together and have broadened their understanding of pupils' levels of attainment and areas for improvement. However, with the exception of the system for tracking pupils' attainment in some aspects of the core subjects, too many elements of the action plan have not been evaluated for the impact they have on pupils' learning. The school's self-evaluation and report to the governing body do

not provide sufficient evidence of improvement in key aspects of the quality of achievement, teaching, learning, behaviour and attitudes.

The seconded deputy headteacher has taken on key aspects of subject co-ordination in areas where the school was weak. In addition, the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have usefully engaged in monitoring of planning and teaching. The literacy subject leader has worked effectively with the literacy consultant to establish new working practices. However, some key subjects remain without a co-ordinator at present and, generally, subject co-ordination is inadequate.

Some aspects of the action plan have been implemented successfully but progress overall is limited and leadership and management remain unsatisfactory.

Governance of the school is developing but remains unsatisfactory. The composition of the governing body has changed significantly in the last year. Key personnel are new to their posts. Two experienced governors, appointed by the LEA, have recently taken up their places. Governors have been identified to monitor aspects of the action plan. A committee structure has recently been established. Information provided to governors by the headteacher is not yet sufficiently analytical and evaluative. Planned visits to the school for monitoring purposes have not yet occurred. The governing body is now in a stronger position to fulfil its duties but is not yet holding staff to account sufficiently for the school's progress. A number of policies have not been reviewed and are out of date.

The school has received substantial support from the LEA and school improvement service at all levels. Consultants and other advisers have trained teachers and teaching assistants. The school improvement officer has provided formal and informal guidance and support to the headteacher in planning, implementing and monitoring action. Governors have received induction training and support in responding to the requirement to produce an action plan.

### **Action taken to address the areas for improvement**

#### **1: improve pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 4, particularly in English, mathematics and science and in information and communication technology (ICT), art, physical and religious education, and geography across the school**

Audits of provision have been completed in literacy and science. Training has been provided in key aspects of literacy teaching such as guided reading. Regular unaided writing assessments are used to track pupils' progress.

The other specified subjects have either only recently had a co-ordinator designated or still do not have one. Whilst long term plans have been formulated to ensure appropriate coverage of these subjects, pupils currently have

underdeveloped skills and understanding and teaching too often focuses on content.

Progress is limited.

## **2: improve the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to support learning in other subjects**

This area is subsumed into other sections of the school's action plan. There has been some attempt to include the use of ICT in lesson planning but this is considerably impaired by the range, quality and availability of equipment. The planning for literacy and numeracy to support learning in other subjects is at a very early stage.

Progress is limited.

## **3: improve the provision for pupils' personal development and raise the standard of behaviour**

Steps are being taken to ensure that a more structured curriculum in personal, health and social education (PSHE) is provided. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development (SMSC) is currently varied, with good provision through formal opportunities for spiritual development but much less evident provision for other aspects and too little evaluation of its overall extent. Senior managers are aware of the need to provide a structure for enhancing social and personal development across the curriculum, but pupil tasks which involve co-operation or joint problem-solving are relatively rare. Some teachers make efforts to encourage formal opportunities for pupils to speak. There are plans to introduce a structure for assessing personal development. However, current provision is insecure because it is not explicitly addressed through planning; indeed, current planning forms do not provide space for identifying personal development opportunities.

The school has invested significantly in playground equipment which was seen to be well used on a sunny lunchtime during the inspection. The level of supervision at lunchtime is good, with teaching assistants helping to stimulate and guide play activities. As a result, the formerly high level of accident and injury during break and lunch times, which particularly involved boys, has been reduced to an acceptable level.

The behaviour policy has been reviewed and updated. Staff have received behaviour management training. Systems now exist for recording the incidents of unacceptable behaviour but there is not yet a full analysis or evaluation that would facilitate further strategic improvement

Progress is reasonable.

#### **4: improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 1 to 4**

A number of lesson observations have been carried out by the headteacher and school improvement officers as part of wider improvements in monitoring. These have focused on different aspects of the work of teachers and teaching assistants and have often provided sound advice on areas for improvement. The school has stated that approximately 75 per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory of which about 25 per cent is good and these findings were confirmed in the inspection. However, the strength of teaching by individuals also varies between subjects.

A new “teaching for learning” policy is being written in conjunction with the school improvement officer but has not yet been introduced. A four-day training course was provided for the new teaching assistants. Work has been conducted to improve the use of assessment. For example, there has been training on the accurate identification of levels of attainment and year-group assessment folders have been started.

The planning format does not easily address cross-curricular links, nor the agenda for personal development. The reliance on weekly planning does not help all teachers to plan for consistently good individual lessons.

The assessment and tracking of pupils’ work is making teachers think more carefully about assessment practice in general. Some training work has been conducted in marking and some pupils’ work now has detailed guidance on how to improve. However, pupils have a generally limited understanding of what they must do to improve. National Curriculum levels and class targets have recently been displayed, but some pupils have little awareness of them.

Progress is limited.

#### **5: improve the leadership, management and governance of the school**

The headteacher has received support and guidance from the LEA and school improvement service to assist in developing the action plan and developing styles of leadership and management to engage and motivate staff. Initiatives such as the writing assessments have encouraged better teamwork and sharing of expertise. Aspects of the school’s action plan have been put into practice. Some monitoring, including joint lesson observation with the school improvement officer and link adviser, has taken place but the school’s evaluation is largely based on the completion of tasks at present rather than on the assessment of the impact on pupils’ learning.

The governing body has developed a committee structure and has been strengthened by the appointment, on behalf of the LEA, of two experienced governors. Named governors have been identified to monitor particular aspects of the action plan. As yet, this has not formally occurred.

Progress is limited.



**6: to meet statutory requirements:**

- **implement the cycle of performance management**
- **ensure attendance registers are marked properly and attendance rates included in the information for parents**
- **ensure that all the required subjects of the curriculum are taught and in enough depth**

The performance management system is in place for all teachers. Appropriate induction, support and monitoring are in place for the newly qualified teacher.

Attendance registers are now marked correctly.

Training has been provided for teachers in dance and gymnastics. Additional resources have been purchased for art, history, geography and religious education. There are growing links to further support the teaching of PE. The school improvement service has provided support and training in subjects such as geography and science. Swimming is being provided in some year groups.

A curriculum mapping exercise has begun in order to develop a long-term curriculum plan, which has not existed previously. The long-term development of a curriculum which is varied but of consistent quality is being delayed at present by uncertainties about subject co-ordination. There are no co-ordinators for subjects such as history and geography. The school has tentative plans to address this problem through links with other schools. At present the understanding of skills and progression in some subjects is inadequate; there is a tendency to teach topics and facts rather than to emphasise a development of skills, with the result that pupils' progress is slow.

Progress is limited.