



8 June 2005

Mr R Adams
Headteacher
Mapplewells Primary School
Hennine Lane
Sutton-in-Ashfield
Nottinghamshire
NG17 1HU

Dear Mr Adams

Implementation of Mapplewells Primary School's Action Plan

Following my visit to your school on 23 and 24 May 2005, I write to confirm the findings and to notify you of the outcomes.

As you know, the inspection was part of a policy involving a broader series of visits by HMI and Additional Inspectors to check on the development and improvement of schools where the section 10 inspection indicated that the school was underachieving. You will recall that the aims of the visit were to assess the progress made in addressing and eliminating underachievement and meeting the targets given in the action plan. I also evaluated standards of achievement and the quality of education, especially in relation to areas of underachievement.

During the visit I inspected 12 lessons or part lessons; attended a registration period; scrutinised documentation provided by the school; and held discussions with yourself and nominated staff on the causes and areas of underachievement. I also examined a range of the pupils' work and spoke informally with other staff and pupils.

On the basis of the evidence gathered during the visit, I made the following observations to you, the chair of governors and representatives of the LEA.

The school's action plan is well organised and addresses the identified areas for improvement through a coherent range of separate activities, each with an accompanying set of measures to judge progress. There are clear definitions of timescale, resource implications, responsibilities and targets. These elements are addressed systematically through procedures for the regular evaluation of the impact of the initiatives undertaken. The arrangements also enable the identification of subsequent activities to ensure that an appropriate rate of progress is sustained. Particular attention has been given to the key elements of work scrutiny; accurate assessment and marking; and the monitoring of planning. The

initiatives in the school's action plan are matched and supported by the LEA's programme to support and report upon progress in addressing underachievement and meeting agreed targets. As well as systematic evaluation, the continuum of support provided by the LEA has been influential in the progress which has been made.

The standards achieved by the pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are marginally above the national average in English but slightly below average in mathematics and science. These results indicate significant improvement in English; the pupils' previous attainment at the higher level (Level 5) has been maintained. Although results in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 are slightly below the age-related expectation, the performance of the more able pupils at the higher level has been raised significantly. The results in Key Stage 2 indicate good progress overall from the standards attained at the end of Key Stage 1, where the comparative standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above those of similar schools. These data also underpin the value-added measures between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, all of which place the school in the upper quartile of achievement and indicate the progress made in addressing identified areas of previous underachievement. The raising of standards and the subsequent removal of the key elements of underachievement are substantially based in the quality of data analysis, the subsequent setting of targets and the systems for pupil tracking undertaken by the senior management team, LEA support staff and governors.

The data were reflected in the standards attained in the 12 lessons which were inspected. The progress made by the pupils was good in half of the lessons; a scrutiny of pupils' previous work indicates that significant attention has been given to the curricular issues revealed by the analysis of results and the systematic monitoring of individual achievement.

The school's initiatives are also evident in the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in all lessons and was good or very good in half. The quality of teaching in some key parts of the school, for example, in Year R, Year 1 and Year 5, provides an important base for the pupils' achievements in the National Curriculum tests at the end of the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching and learning is also underpinned by the close attention which is given to issues emerging from the analysis of data. Strong elements in this regard are the integration and reinforcement of pupils' experiences in different subjects; the effective use of prior knowledge as a starting point for learning; the quality of questioning; and the differentiated expectation of the pupils.

The leadership and management of the school are good. There is an effective management structure, involving the headteacher, senior staff and curriculum co-ordinators. Their work in keeping the school's progress and development under review is strongly supported by the governors' Strategic Development Committee and the LEA. The impact of their joint activities is reflected in a variety of ways, but particularly with regard to data analysis, work scrutiny, classroom observation

and the professional development of the staff. The governors' capacity to act strategically is increased by the quality of their information base in respect of the school's comparative performance. The recent initiative in linking nominated governors to each area of the action plan is significant in securing the rate of progress and their capacity is increased further by the training in classroom monitoring and observation which they have received from the LEA.

The LEA has given strong and effective support to the school and this is illustrated well in the progress which has been made. In mathematics, for example, LEA support staff have modelled lessons; worked alongside class teachers; undertaken the assessment of pupils' work; evaluated teachers' performance; and arranged relevant programmes of professional development.

The attendance rate of the pupils is good, currently at 94.5 per cent; there is a small amount of unauthorised absence (0.4 per cent). These data and the good behavioural standards and the attitudes to learning of the pupils are strong elements in securing the school's progress.

Evaluation of Progress:

The school is making good progress towards raising pupils' attainment and eliminating underachievement.

In relation to the action plan and the impact of the actions taken, good progress has been made in addressing the key tasks which relate to the school's underachievement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of governors, and the Director of Education for Nottinghamshire. This letter will also be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

RON WEIR
Additional Inspector

cc: chair of governors
LEA