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Mr Capper  
Acting Headteacher  
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Lincolnshire  
PE11 3RB

Dear Mr Capper

### **Implementation of The Pinchbeck East CE Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Mr A Knight HMI and Mr M Sutton HMI to your school on 25 and 26 May 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: 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 has made reasonable progress since the last monitoring inspection and reasonable progress overall since being subject to special measures.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PINCHBECK EAST CE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

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

During the visit 20 parts of lessons, two registration sessions, two hymn practices and one assembly were inspected. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the chair of governors and senior members of staff. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the acting headteacher, the chair of the governing body and two representatives from the LEA. The representative from the diocese was unable to attend.

The school has suffered from continued instability of staffing. Considerable time and energy have been spent on recruitment to replace nearly half of the teaching staff and on finding temporary teachers for four classes. However, appointments have now been made and the school should begin next term with an almost complete team of permanent staff.

Standards in lessons have improved slightly and the attainment of more pupils was broadly in line with national expectations. A few lessons enabled the pupils to raise significantly the standard of their work; however, too many lessons were aimed at the lower levels of expected attainment with the result that many pupils did not achieve as well as they should because the work did not challenge them sufficiently.

There were signs of improvement in the standard of English; however, despite the appropriate emphasis given to writing, many of the pupils had weak writing skills. For example, many pupils found it difficult to form letters accurately and of a consistent size. The weaknesses in writing are affecting the quality of work across the curriculum.

There was a marked difference in the pupils' attainment from one class to the next. While spelling skills were being established well in the reception classes there were significant gaps in the pupils' phonetic understanding in the other classes. Pupils in one Year 2 class quickly mastered the concept of alliteration but in the other Year 2 class they found it difficult to identify adjectives. Rapid progress was also seen in a Year 3 class where spelling rules were skilfully reinforced.

Standards in science have improved and the pupils' attainment was close to national expectations. However, the teachers' confidence and subject knowledge continue to vary considerably, particularly in practical sessions. The range of work seen in the Year 6 pupils' books was satisfactory but presentation overall was weak. In addition to poor handwriting, the pupils' drawing techniques lacked care and precision. While more opportunities have been given for pupils to use different

methods of recording results, such as tables, charts and graphs, there were not enough examples of more extended writing about science.

In mathematics, the pupils' attainment was also close to national expectations but teaching was inconsistent in quality. While pupils in a Year 4 class showed secure understanding of geometry at Levels 4 and 5, the pupils in a Year 5 class were asked to round, to the nearest ten, numbers up to one hundred when it was evident they could confidently do this with numbers in the hundreds and thousands. Overall, there was insufficient opportunity for the pupils to apply and extend previously learned skills, knowledge and understanding in different situations which limited the progress of the more able pupils.

The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved. Sixteen lessons were satisfactory or better; three were good, three were very good and one was outstanding. While there was a slight reduction in the proportion of lessons that were unsatisfactory and an increase in the amount that was very good or better, there was a fine balance of strengths and weaknesses in many of the satisfactory lessons. In too many lessons the tasks were managed ineffectively and there was insufficient challenge for the pupils and a lack of appropriate strategies to improve their attitudes and behaviour. The teaching varied in quality across the school and this was most marked in Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection some teachers have made significant progress in some subjects while the improvement made by others has been limited.

The introduction of subject targets is a very positive development but they were not used consistently. Pupils were often unaware of what they needed to do to improve their work. The quality of marking was too varied. The best was exemplary with detailed, supportive comments which challenged pupils to improve their work, while some was superficial and occasionally erroneous.

In the more effective lessons, the activities were sequenced progressively and briskly to reinforce and extend clearly defined areas of learning. Teaching assistants provided useful support, especially for the pupils who have special needs. On occasions teaching assistants kept individual pupils fully involved in whole-class discussions through discrete and effective interventions. In the very good lessons, perceptive questioning made the pupils think hard and probed their understanding. Where expectations were high, progress was rapid. A temporary teacher taught an outstanding lesson that enabled and encouraged the pupils to consider complex mathematical concepts.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were always good around the school. They were sensible and polite and keen to talk to visitors. Their attitudes and behaviour in lessons have improved and were satisfactory or better in all but one lesson, they were good in six and very good in six. While all temporary teachers worked hard to remember names and establish effective working relationships with the pupils in their class, there were strong contrasts in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. In the lesson where attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory the pupils did not

listen or act on instructions in an appropriate manner and were quick to take advantage of any ambiguity. However, in another lesson taught by a temporary teacher, the pupils acted in a very mature manner by sensitively helping the teacher and contributing sensibly to a discussion about friendship.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were also good in assemblies and the hymn practices which were ably supported by two teachers. However, there was insufficient emphasis on improving the quality of singing and the opportunity to increase the pupils' sense of challenge and subsequent fulfilment was largely missed.

The acting headteacher continues to provide sensitive, effective leadership that enables members of the senior management team to develop their roles and responsibilities. Key stage teams are now fully established. As a result, good progress has been achieved in providing stimulating learning environments in all classrooms, in improving generic teaching skills and in establishing more thorough and extensive whole-school record keeping systems. The school recognises that the centrally collated data needs to be refined regularly by teachers in the light of their knowledge of individual pupils. The introduction of more formal meetings between class teachers and members of the senior management team are intended to support the refinement of data and to help increase the pace of progress.

Even though subject teaching has improved, the subject leaders' contribution to school improvement is underdeveloped and there is insufficient clarity about how they interconnect with the senior management team. The school recognises the need to give greater emphasis to the development of subject expertise and that this support is best given at an individual level rather than to the staff as a whole. The school is also aware that the curriculum map requires completion urgently so that teachers have a secure basis on which to develop their subject.

The governing body has provided good support for the school in dealing with pressing matters of staffing and budgets and in monitoring the action plan. There is a clear recognition of the need to develop the role of subject leaders and to monitor more closely the provision for the classes that are being taught by the temporary teaching staff. Training has been completed for all governors.

The LEA has continued to provide good support to the school.

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

#### **1: raise standards in writing across the school, particularly those of boys, and standards in science across the school**

Marked improvement has been achieved by some teachers especially in the teaching of science, in the use of assessment data to inform planning, and in enabling more focused support for individual pupils. However, weaknesses in

writing and inconsistencies in the teaching continue to prevent standards being raised further across the school.

Progress is reasonable.

## **2: improve the leadership and management of the school and the work of the governing body**

The acting headteacher has laid sound foundations for the ongoing improvement of the school and has enabled the senior management team and governing body to operate more effectively. However, the time and energy given to staffing issues and the lack of development of subject leaders has reduced the overall impact of the leadership and management of the school.

Progress is reasonable.

## **3: establish whole school record keeping systems**

A thorough record keeping system has been developed but it has not yet had a significant impact on the pupils' learning and standards.

Progress is limited.

## **4: improve pupils' cultural development**

The newly appointed co-ordinator for cultural development has made a good start in evaluating provision, identifying weaknesses and establishing a clear and achievable action plan. The number of multi-language signs has been increased and some resources, such as dual-language books and materials for teachers, are being improved. However, other resources are underdeveloped, such as those to promote music from different musical traditions.

The pupils' work on display shows increased exploration of other cultures, particularly in art and religious education. However, there is insufficient exploration in other subjects, notably in geography and history. The work on display shows a satisfactory knowledge of the more obvious features of other cultures, such as their symbols, artefacts and artistic styles, but there is limited consideration of the more challenging aspects of customs, values and beliefs. The school has started to make good use of direct contributions from people within the immediate community to explain aspects of their faiths and cultures.

Overall, progress is reasonable.