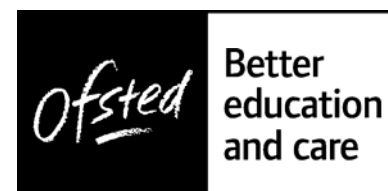


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15 June 2006

Mrs A Kipling  
Acting Headteacher  
Berkeley Junior School  
Marsden Drive  
Scunthorpe  
DN15 8AH

Dear Mrs Kipling,

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BERKELEY JUNIOR SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Chris Penter and Jackie Sparkes, Additional Inspectors to your school on 7 and 8 June 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in July 2005.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the current and former acting headteachers, members of staff, two representatives of the local authority and the chair of governors.

### **Context**

The headteacher has been on leave since just after the last monitoring inspection. An acting headteacher was seconded to the school from the staff of the local authority and, very recently, a new acting headteacher has been seconded to the school from another primary school. The school has experienced a number of other staff changes and several staff will be leaving at the end of the present term. During

the second day of the inspection all pupils took part in a special mathematics investigation day.

### **Achievement and standards**

Pupils' progress has been exceptionally low in the recent past. Subject co-ordinators in English and mathematics are now establishing plans to improve this situation, but developments in science have been limited by staff changes and absence. Subject co-ordinators are becoming better informed about weaknesses in the teaching of their subjects.

Pupils' progress in lessons is broadly satisfactory at best, but too rarely good enough to redress the deficit from earlier very weak progress. Few lessons feature work that is skilfully targeted at the needs of all the learners so that, commonly, some pupils make sound progress but others do not. The school is working towards a more robust assessment and tracking system, but is not yet in a position to evaluate pupils' progress over the last six months. Its strategic weakness in this respect is undermining teachers' efforts to improve.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2005:

- Raise the pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science—  
inadequate progress.

### **Personal development and well-being**

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy school, which is reflected in their good attendance and participation in extra-curricular activities. The behaviour of most pupils has improved since the last inspection, partly due to the implementation of new strategies and the appointment of a sports consultant at lunchtimes to provide structured activities. However the opportunities for pupils to further develop their social skills are limited in routine lessons to such activities as talking to partners. The school encourages healthy lifestyles through personal health and social education, science lessons and active participation in sports. The school nurse is involved with the sex and drugs education programme and a local police officer talks to pupils about personal safety and moral issues. Pupils are encouraged to drink water regularly and fruit is on sale at break times. Spiritual education involves visits to the local church and Sikh temple and input from the local vicar in assemblies. Charity fundraising events increase the pupils' awareness of people in need, as well as involving them in the local community. Modern foreign language lessons and the school's partnership with a school in Madrid help pupils to appreciate other cultures. Preparation for pupils' future well-being is helped through citizenship lessons, by allowing pupils to run the school fruit shop, and in the explicit social development planning involved in the mathematics investigation day. Pupils are given posts of responsibility through the school council, acting as playground buddies and various monitor roles.

## Quality of provision

There have been some improvements in teaching and learning but significant elements remain unsatisfactory. The proportion of good lessons seen has increased slightly and the structure and sequencing of activities are now supported by a standard planning framework. Learning objectives and learning outcomes are generally made explicit and are mostly effectively communicated to pupils. In the best lessons pupils are actively engaged in their learning, are appropriately challenged and are invited to take some responsibility for their own learning. Too often however, large sections of lessons are taken up by teachers giving elaborate explanation and instruction or by whole-class, teacher directed, activities. The school's own monitoring of teaching and learning has not been seen as a priority over the last few months and as a result has become sporadic. It is therefore difficult for the school to assess accurately the impact of recent initiatives.

The planning framework is helping to improve the links between what the school knows about individual pupils through assessment and the planning and provision of learning opportunities, but its impact on pupils' learning remains tenuous. In some lessons all the pupils within a group engage in the same activities and teachers have the same expectations of their progress. This leaves some struggling to keep up whilst others find little challenge in the work. Some good practice was seen in a history lesson where a series of differentiated tasks were provided for groups formed on the basis of assessment data and all pupils responded with enthusiasm to a challenge appropriate to their level.

The school continues to improve the way in which it collects and collates the data provided by the termly assessments and this has been further systematised in the last few weeks by the introduction of a computer-based system which will make the tracking of pupils' progress and the identification of underachievement more effective. It will be some time however before the system contains sufficient data to produce reliable predictions and identify trends. The school does not have a coherent policy or framework for marking and assessment on a day-to-day basis and as a result there is considerable variation in practice between teachers. This limits the opportunities for teachers to develop a clear picture of the progress of each child in each curriculum area and develop learning strategies to maximise the progress of all. The staff have received good quality training in assessment for learning but this is yet to make an impact on planning, standards and levels of achievement.

Improvements have been made in the structuring and delivery of the curriculum and further improvements are planned. It is too early to gauge the impact these will have on achievement. In the core subjects there is some move to allow greater flexibility of approach. A start has been made in developing stronger cross-curricular links, for example between literacy and history and between information and communication technology and all subjects. Teachers are making good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance their teaching. French has been introduced into the school and curriculum planning has been more closely linked to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. However the school has yet to develop a holistic plan for the

curriculum or a strategy to maximise learning opportunities and the development of skills for all pupils.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. Child-protection procedures are in place and are known by staff. Risk assessments are carried out where appropriate and staff have received training in health and safety matters from the local authority. A learning mentor is available to give support to pupils and parents who are in need of it. Pupils say they feel safe in school and feel that there is always someone they can talk to if they wish, either an adult or a playground buddy. The school receives support from outside agencies such as specialist health staff and the behaviour centre. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress through reports and parents' evenings, although pupils need more guidance on how to improve their work and achieve targets. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, but is reliant on external support.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2005:

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum – inadequate progress.

## **Leadership and management**

The substantive headteacher has been absent since February and in the interim period two acting headteachers have led the school. Reasonable care has been taken to ensure a degree of continuity in leadership, but the school is uncertain about its future direction. This will be further tested when the deputy headteacher leaves at the end of the current term, to be replaced by a new deputy. A seconded member of staff will also be leaving; it is planned to add an additional senior member of staff after Christmas. This situation requires special care to ensure that there is a continuity of strategy and purpose, but the detailed plan written after the last monitoring inspection contains a range of helpful actions although it lacks quantified targets. The strategic role of the acting headteacher is made more complex by also holding the onerous role of co-ordinator of special educational needs. Despite this, there has been some improvement in the school's climate for learning and the confidence of staff in moving forwards. Staff feel that communication has improved and that they have a clearer opportunity to contribute to the school's improvement. Managers have played a greater role in monitoring planning.

Nonetheless, the school still has significant weaknesses because evaluation is not robust enough to drive further improvement. Although the school has a growing collection of information on its performance, the availability of quantified evidence and its use in the evaluation of the school's performance is limited. For example, information about pupils' behaviour exists but is not used in a systematic way to seek improvement and assessment data is not yet extensive enough to have significant impact. No strategic evaluation of pupils' progress was available during the inspection. The school lacks its own rigorous analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, relying too much on external guidance. These factors limit the incisiveness of the school's self-evaluation and also the review of recent

progress, the latter containing no quantified data. Revision of the school's self-evaluation was conducted without reference to the governors. Senior and middle managers have not yet succeeded in eliminating the weaknesses in teaching, such as in the planning of lessons, noted in the last monitoring report; therefore, they have had too little impact on pupils' progress. The school still lacks appropriate policies in some significant areas.

The local authority has appointed five additional governors and these have brought added expertise to the governing body. They provide a valuable opportunity to enhance the work of other governors by modelling good practice, such as the asking of incisive questions. Governors are increasingly aware that their role in making their own evaluation of the school's performance is being hampered by the lack of quantified information and are seeking to address this problem. The appointment of the headteacher of the infants school to the governing body has enhanced co-operation between the two schools.

Although there has been relatively good progress made in improving the leadership of the governing body, there has been less improvement elsewhere so that other aspects of leadership and management remain ineffective overall.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2005:

- Improve the leadership and management including governance – inadequate progress.

### **External support**

The local authority has intervened appropriately over the leadership and, in partnership with the governors, is working towards the long-term resolution of the issues. It has worked hard to arrange the interim leadership of the school. It has had a significant impact on the work of the governing body through the appointment of five additional governors, who have helped to raise the standard of governance at the school. It has been energetic in supporting the school through its advisory staff. However the local authority, like the governors, has not yet been able to secure a marked improvement in the school's outcomes because the range of information available on which to base an analysis is still too limited. The school is well behind the planned schedule for the removal of special measures.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the school's ability to gather evidence about its performance, to evaluate this and develop strategic responses.
- Develop effective practice for using assessment information to improve teachers' planning and thereby accelerate pupils' progress.

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching across the school and use this analysis to increase the proportion of good and better teaching.
- Ensure that all necessary policies and frameworks are in place and up to date.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education of North Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Gray  
**H M Inspector**