



7 February 2007

The Headteacher  
Fairfield Endowed CofE Junior School  
Boarstone Lane  
Fairfield  
Buxton  
Derbyshire  
SK17 7NA

Dear Miss Sherratt,

#### OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Following my visit with Usha Devi, Additional Inspector, on 6 February 2007 we would like to thank you for the help which you and your staff gave. I would also like to thank you for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during our visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 5–6 June 2006, the school was asked to ensure the senior management team, subject leaders and governors rigorously monitored pupil and staff performance; improve the quality of teaching and learning; make better use of assessment data; and improve attendance.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

Since joining the school in September 2006 it is clear that you have begun to address the issues identified in the last inspection. The reorganisation of the senior management team into the senior leadership team has successfully focused efforts on improving standards. This team has produced detailed timetables for monitoring teaching and children's work. Lesson observations have taken place and clear judgements have been made about the quality of teaching. Although observations have been effective in improving the overall quality of teaching, more frequent observations would lead to greater improvements.

The school has improved the way it makes regular checks on the progress children make in reading, writing and mathematics. Collated information from these assessments is beginning to produce an overview of standards across the school but this new way of working has not yet been in place long enough to have sufficient impact. Overall these assessments indicate that many of the children are reaching standards that are below what would be expected considering the children's end of Year 2 test results. This is especially the case in writing. Although this information paints a bleak picture the school is responding positively. Effective use is being made to accurately identify groups of children who are underachieving and through extra support these children are now making at least satisfactory progress.

Literacy and mathematics subject leaders have developed their roles following the last inspection and now give teachers more support and advice. They have been involved in monitoring teaching and children's work and have produced reports that include some pointers for improvement. These reports, however, lack a detailed analysis of the progress that children are making.

The governors have begun to be more involved in the work of the school. They are now better organised into committees, including the post Ofsted action planning group that meets regularly to discuss and monitor the progress the school is making against the key areas for improvement. Governors have visited the school as part of an open morning and this has added to their improved understanding of how well the school is working.

The senior leadership team has produced useful criteria for judging the quality of teaching and learning. This has improved teachers' understanding of how lessons are evaluated and made clear the links between teaching and children's progress. During the visit most of the teaching seen was satisfactory with a small amount that was good. The school's own monitoring of teaching confirms that the quality of teaching remains varied across the school. In good lessons work was carefully matched to children's different abilities and children understood what they were expected to learn. Some teaching was satisfactory because too long was spent on the introductions of lessons which were pitched at the middle ability range and so a number of children were not sufficiently challenged. The school is aware that the standards in writing are particularly weak and teaching is not yet effectively improving children's writing skills. Children's progress in writing is also hindered because the way they present their work is often poor.

The assistant headteacher has led the work on attendance. The school has successfully used a whole range of strategies to improve attendance including special assemblies, class awards and contacting parents when children fail to turn up. One particularly successful approach has been to work very closely with the infant school so that messages and expectations about attendance are united. As a result of all of this attendance has improved significantly and is now good.

The Local Authority has provided satisfactory support especially in helping the school to judge the quality of teaching and in providing advice on tracking children's progress.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Cook  
Her Majesty's Inspector