



4 October 2006

Mrs M Papworth  
The Headteacher  
Fiskerton CE Primary School  
Ferry Road  
Fiskerton  
Lincolnshire  
LN3 4HU

Dear Mrs Papworth

## SERIOUS WEAKNESSES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF FISKERTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 26 and 27 September 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 was found to have serious weaknesses in February 2005.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, a representative from the LA and the headteacher of the collaborating primary school.

### Context

The future of the school is still under consideration, due to the continuing small number of pupils. Among the possibilities being considered is the proposal to federate the school with the local school with which Fiskerton is working in collaboration.

## Achievement and standards

The results of the most recent National Curriculum tests in 2006 were significantly better than those in 2005 for the Year 6 pupils, who had made good progress since they were in Year 2, particularly in mathematics and science, where standards were above average. The results in English were weaker, because no pupil achieved the higher level. The good pace of progress for this year group made up the ground they had lost in the lower school, except in writing. The test results for those in Year 2 were again below average.

Achievement is satisfactory overall but the school's data demonstrates that progress is inconsistent between year groups. The pupils do better in Years 5 and 6 than they do in Years 3 and 4. The Reception children's progress is variable uneven over time and between areas of learning. It is not as secure as progress in Years 1 and 2, where it is satisfactory. Progress in lessons is mainly satisfactory; pupils build adequately on their skills and knowledge. Standards are mainly similar to those in other schools, although these vary with the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the year group. The presentation of pupils' work is much better because the school has worked hard to improve handwriting, although there are still some pupils whose pencil grip hampers their writing style, and whose problems have not been corrected. While their ability to tackle mathematical problems is at the expected level, some pupils fail to answer these accurately because their number bonds are not secure.

## Personal development and well-being

The previous monitoring letter identified shortcomings in the pupils' ability to take responsibility and the school has taken suitable action. There are no longer too many adults in a room at once and the pupils are being encouraged far more to work on their own. Consequently, there is far less reliance on adults and the pupils are developing more independence. They continue to behave well on the whole, and to enjoy good relationships. For the most part, staff check that pupils are behaving and working well, encouraging and intervening to ensure that they are attentive and concentrating. However, when the teacher is insufficiently aware of what they are doing, the younger pupils do not always behave appropriately, chattering noisily. There have been no recent exclusions. Attendance has improved and is now good.

## Quality of provision

Teaching continues to be mainly satisfactory and some is good. There have been a number of improvements since the previous visit. Teachers usually share their planning in detail with teaching assistants, so that they are well involved in the lesson, although some do this more consistently than others. Teaching assistants now make a sound contribution to the work of their focus groups and pupils and also to the beginning and end of the lesson. The use of assessment to plan for the range of age and ability has improved and there is much more use of work that is planned for individuals, where this is appropriate. There were some examples of questions targeted at particular year groups, so that they could participate at the right level. However, some work is still too easy for the more able pupils, who are not always moved on rapidly enough once it is evident that they have grasped a concept.

The use of tracking and target-setting is developing, and are now adequate, although these have taken some time to become a key part of practice. The school now has an adequate bank of data to show the progress the pupils are making over time and to identify where it has been rapid or too slow. This has made pinpointing individuals for support more effective. The pupils have targets for their work and these are displayed in their books. However, there are too many to be meaningful or memorable, either in the long or short term, and therefore rather off putting for the pupils and difficult for them to remember. Marking has improved and is now often good, referring to the purpose of the lesson and showing pupils how they can improve.

When the teaching is good, in the junior department, it is because it is lively and enthusiastic, using interesting resources. The teacher sets out what pupils of different ages and levels are to learn and asks them what they think they will be able to do as a result. There is a good use of humour and the lesson moves on briskly. The tasks are carefully matched to attainment, building on pupils' knowledge and understanding. The plenary session is used well to draw together learning. However, there is some teaching which does not help pupils to move on well. This occurs when the lesson is not planned well enough to develop the pupils' understanding adequately. Occasionally, pupils' behaviour is not controlled well enough. Sometimes, the tasks for the Reception children are not matched adequately to the Foundation Stage curriculum. The outside play area for the children is well-resourced but staff do not always take the opportunity to plan its use to best effect.

The school has worked hard to identify the skills that should be developed for each year group for each subject and now has a useful amount of information that can be built on. Links with the Foundation Stage curriculum are shown. However, the whole of the National Curriculum has been written out, rather

than drawing out just the skills and showing how these are to be taught through each topic the school teaches. Consequently, much time has been lost and development slowed. Nevertheless, the school's useful skills checklists have the potential to support this development.

The school continues to take good physical and emotional care of the pupils and the academic support is now adequate. There are satisfactory arrangements for taking their views into account, through the school council. However, the focus for their discussions tends to be on fund-raising and is not yet sufficiently concerned with the whole work of the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005;

- *Make sure that pupils have work that is appropriate to their age and ability in subjects other than English and mathematics.*

Although much work has been done, progress has been inadequate because there is not yet enough guidance on the skills to be taught in each topic.

- *Better involve the pupils in their own learning by making it clear to them what they are expected to learn*

Progress in this area has been satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

The school continues to concentrate on bringing about the necessary improvements and has been successful in a number of areas. However, this has been accomplished with considerable external support over the four years since the school was first identified as having serious weaknesses. While self-evaluation is accurate in the broadest sense, the areas for further development tend to be those identified by others. Leadership and management have been largely reactive rather than refining the way in which it uses its own data to show precisely where improvement is needed. For example, the school has not analysed in any depth why the Year 6 results in 2006 were worse in writing than in other subjects or monitored standards in other years to check whether this was a pattern. Consequently, it has not yet demonstrated that it has enough capacity to improve.

Improvement planning for the present year is adequate, although there is too little detail about the timings and the measurable outcomes. The major planning weakness is in the longer term. The future of the school depends to a large extent on the numbers it is able to attract, and therefore there has been, rightly, considerable work on the possible impact on the budget of

projected figures. However, there has not been long-term planning alongside this to demonstrate the school's intentions in the light of those possible outcomes. The suggested staffing arrangements have not been considered carefully enough, particularly in the light of the impact on the existing staff, on leadership and management overall, and on the impact on particular classes.

The arrangements for management now provide adequate opportunities to monitor the curriculum and pupils' progress. The monitoring of planning and lessons has improved and is demonstrating more evaluation, but is still not as rigorous as it could be in focusing on the work for specific year groups and whether progress is sufficient for all pupils. There is limited evidence that the school is monitoring the impact of its initiatives, beyond the anecdotal. For example, while some skill development is being identified in teachers' planning, the school is not able to show that this is successful in raising standards in the foundation subjects. The growing bank of data is not yet being used sufficiently to monitor and take action on progress in different year groups.

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

- *Ensure that the arrangements for management provide adequate opportunities to monitor the curriculum and the progress pupils make*

Progress has been satisfactory in providing the time and monitoring is showing an adequate improvement.

#### External support

Both the LA and the collaborating school have made good contributions to the progress the school has made.

#### Main Judgements

The school has made satisfactory progress overall in removing the causes of its serious weaknesses. However, there are still concerns about leadership and management and whether the school has demonstrated the capacity to improve.

## Priorities for further improvement

- The school should be able to demonstrate that it has secure capacity to improve, by driving forward its own developments through more thorough monitoring of all information; using the data to plan strategically for the necessary improvements and by carrying these out rigorously.

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

Yours sincerely

Pat Cox  
Additional Inspector