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Miss M Wright  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Wright

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Berkeley Junior School

## Introduction

Following my visit with Andrew Bennett, Additional Inspector, to your school on 12 and 13 June 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fifth 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

Lessons in all the classes and two assemblies were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed at break and lunchtime. Discussions were held with senior staff, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority. A range of documentation was examined.

## Context

A new headteacher took up post at the beginning of the summer term. There are to be some changes, but staffing looks set to be generally stable for the new school year in September.

## Achievement and standards

The school has already completed a valuable analysis of the teacher assessments and tests recently undertaken by all year groups. The aim has rightly been to determine how much progress each pupil has made, set against that required over the whole of Key Stage 2. In Year 6 booster work has proved successful in the short term, resulting in the selected pupils making rapid gains in the six weeks leading up to national tests. Nonetheless, the prognosis for the school's results in the 2007 tests is disappointing. The most recent teacher assessments suggest that scores will be similar to those for 2006, in which case the school will miss its targets by a wide margin.

The results for other year groups show that higher proportions of pupils are making the requisite progress. The Year 5 pupils, in particular, appear set to improve the school's results when they take the national tests in 2008. Nonetheless, in all year groups there are significant proportions of pupils who are behind where they should be, and the subject of most concern varies. In Year 3 it is reading, in Year 4 it is writing and in Year 5 it is mathematics. The school recognises that there is still much to do.

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

- Raise the pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science – inadequate

## Personal development and well-being

As a result of some concerns about the pupils' behaviour, especially in Year 6, there has been an increased emphasis on personal and social education. This has involved help from the local authority's adviser and a community policeman. These concerns were not manifest in lessons or in pupils' conduct around the school. As on previous visits, the pupils were well behaved, did as they were asked, and followed routines closely. This aided the smooth flow of lessons, for instance in the way pupils anticipated what materials they would need and in their ready collaboration in pairs or groups. More pupils than previously volunteered to answer questions and little time was lost through needless chatter.

In assembly, the pupils were generally attentive, keen to contribute their knowledge, and responded maturely to moments of humour. They were responsible and social at lunchtime, both outside and in the dining hall.

Attendance levels remain high. The overall rate so far this year, 95.9%, is well above the national average.

## Quality of provision

There have been valuable adjustments to the system for tracking pupils' progress so that assessments are made more frequently by each teacher, using detailed criteria

related to the sub-levels of the National Curriculum. This should allow the school an earlier and more accurate warning of where action is needed.

Within the curriculum, the drive is rightly to promote literacy across different subjects so pupils can test and develop their skills in practice.

The improvements in teaching have continued. The quality of teaching was good in six lessons and satisfactory in six. Once again, the basic attributes for good teaching – those related to planning, preparation, organisation and structure – were apparent in all lessons. Teachers have responded well to the current points for development over greater precision in learning objectives and questioning. Other noteworthy aspects of teaching included the good use of interactive whiteboards and the skilful contributions of most classroom assistants. Overall expectations have also been raised, an area that was criticised at the last monitoring inspection.

The most common weaknesses, in lessons that were satisfactory overall, related to tailoring tasks and the flow of work more closely to the response of different groups of pupils. This occurred when all the pupils undertook the same task for too long, when some had quickly grasped what had been taught and did not need prolonged practice, while others were struggling and needed a fresh approach.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum – satisfactory

## Leadership and management

The new headteacher has made a purposeful start, building on the foundations and momentum that had been established by the acting headteacher. Senior staff report that morale is good, with strong backing for the headteacher's measured approach to change. The headteacher has made sensible decisions over where her previous experience, for instance over the assessment of pupils' progress, can be utilised to bring sharpness to practice and immediate benefit. In the longer term there are well laid proposals for next year, which include streamlining the management structure, rationalising responsibilities and reorganising arrangements for teachers' time for planning and preparation.

The headteacher has a ready grasp of the issues facing the school. There has been an analysis of assessments to highlight where pupils need to make better progress. Similarly observations of teaching have provided an accurate picture of its quality, as well as aspects that need strengthening. These evaluations have formed the basis for a well-judged strategic plan for 2007-8. The overall plan is to be complemented by separate curriculum plans that are being devised by the subject leaders alongside the deputy headteacher.

The senior staff have continued to undertake important roles in leading initiatives, sometimes in conjunction with the local authority's consultants. They appreciate the school's priorities and understand what is expected of them next year. The

governors have also fulfilled their responsibilities, for instance through further monitoring of aspects of the school's performance, and they have received a frank overview from the headteacher.

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

- Improve the leadership and management including governance – good

#### External support

The local authority's support for the school has been valued and well judged. Consultants have played an important part in helping subject leaders and in boosting the performance of the Year 6 pupils; and the headteacher has received the advice required to ease her into her role. This has been assisted by appointing the former acting headteacher to the governing body.

#### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

#### Priorities for further improvement

The critical priority remains to raise standards. The need for a strategic plan and self-evaluation is being tackled appropriately.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Hardwick  
H M Inspector