

Tribal Education  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR  
T 0845 1236001  
F 0845 1236002

Ofsted helpline  
08456 404045  
[edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk)

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4 May 2007

Mr P Wood  
The Headteacher  
Knighton Fields Primary School and Community Centre  
Knighton Fields Road West  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE2 7NP

Dear Mr Wood

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KNIGHTON FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

### Introduction

Following my visit with Sally Hall, Additional Inspector, to your school on 25 and 26 April 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2006.

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 headteacher, senior management team (SMT), subject leaders, the school council, chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA). Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and pupils.

### Context

Following the school's section 5 inspection in November 2006, the LA assessed the scope for the school to be closed or federated and decided that there was insufficient capacity in local better performing schools. The local authority's Statement of Action stressed its commitment to providing quality primary schooling within the local community. Since the inspection, one teacher has resigned. The deputy headteacher is currently teaching her class.

A long term supply teacher is undertaking some of the deputy's responsibilities such as supply cover and planning, preparation and assessment time. Two new parent governors have been appointed and are now attending governors' meetings. Pupil mobility has increased with the number on roll reducing to 198.

## Achievement and standards

Standards of attainment remain well below average at both key stages. Inspection findings and the school's own assessment data confirm that significant numbers of pupils are underachieving in reading, writing and mathematics. The school assesses pupils' work in English and mathematics regularly and increasingly good use is made of the data gathered to identify and target pupils for support. A range of strategies such as 'Better Reading Partnership' and 'Reading Recovery' have been effectively implemented and these are beginning to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress. Previously identified end of key stage targets were over ambitious. The school is now using data more accurately to identify realistic outcomes. The legacy of previous underachievement means that these remain low. The school knows that these outcomes are not high enough.

Analysis of the school's assessment data shows that although there are pockets of improvement in some classes, this is not yet consistent across the school. Teachers are increasingly using assessment information to track progress against targets set and to plan work that is more accurately matched to pupils' individual needs, but this is having limited impact on the progress children make. Although the rate of progress is satisfactory in most lessons, it is rarely good. The gains made by pupils need to be brisker if the gap between what pupils are attaining and what they are capable of is to close.

Pupils with learning difficulties make at least satisfactory progress in English and mathematics because of the individual and small group support they receive. Scrutiny of books shows variability in the quality and quantity of recorded work. Letter and number formation throughout the school is often inaccurate. By Year 6, some pupils still have difficulty spelling some common words and their presentation is untidy.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- raise standards achieved by pupils and set work that is pitched at the right level and provide guidance that will help improve their work – inadequate.

## Personal development and well-being

The school has worked closely with pupils, parents, governors and staff to develop a range of strategies to raise levels of attendance and tackle lateness. Measures include celebrating high levels of attendance, swiftly following up any unexplained absences and a new policy to discourage parents from taking their children on holiday during term time. However, implementation of these strategies is at an early stage and they have not yet had a sustained impact on reducing absence rates. Although attendance rates rose in the autumn term, they dipped to previous levels in the spring term.

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils are proud of their school and the school council is an effective pupil voice. Pupils work and play together well and respect their teachers. However, some pupils do not take enough pride in their work and are not confident in working without close supervision.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- improve the pupils' attendance – satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

Of the part lessons observed during the visit, over three quarters were satisfactory or better. There are a number of strengths in teaching and learning. Most teachers have clear plans which meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers use a wide range of opportunities to involve pupils in their own learning, for example partner discussion and self-assessment. Adults enjoy good relationships with pupils and behaviour is managed well by consistently applying the behaviour policy. Where teaching and learning are weaker, some teachers plan the same activities for pupils of differing abilities. This does not stretch the most able. In addition, a lack of urgency to complete tasks results in pupils losing concentration. Sometimes group sizes are too large so that not all pupils are able to get involved in the tasks. On occasion, there are missed opportunities for pupils to record their findings.

The teaching assistants often provide valuable support, particularly to those with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, constant and close supervision by both teachers and assistants in group activities means that some pupils become over reliant on adults telling them what to do instead of thinking for themselves.

The school's marking policy has recently been reviewed but there remain inconsistencies in its implementation by staff. Although some marking gives clear points for improvement, these are often not responded to in subsequent lessons. Consequently, pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

The school has made important improvements to the curriculum. The amount of taught time for English and mathematics has been increased to an hour each day. In the majority of lessons these core subjects are now taught in year groups which helps teachers plan to meet pupils' needs more effectively. The school recognises that the quality and quantity of reading resources are inadequate. It has plans to plug the gaps by purchasing and utilising additional books in order to raise standards in reading. The English as an additional language coordinator has made a good start in planning effective support for pupils who are new to learning English. However the school recognises that there is still much to do, including ensuring that teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of these pupils.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- implement a curriculum that caters for the needs of all pupils, including those at the early stages of learning English - satisfactory progress.

The school has taken swift and effective action to tackle deficiencies relating to health and safety issues identified in the last inspection. The LA provided good support to ensure that thorough risk assessments are in place. The governors' health and safety committee has a clear remit to review and report on all health and safety issues. Light projectors are now mounted on classroom ceilings, eliminating any risks of trailing wires. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements and staff are fully aware of the school's procedures on child protection.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- ensure that procedures for making the school a safe and healthy place are implemented rigorously – good.

### Leadership and management

The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership. He is well supported by his senior management team and governors. Between them, they have developed a more strategic approach to school improvement and have started the process of bringing about the necessary improvements. Staff are hard working, receptive and have accepted the responsibility of improving the pupils' performance. The introduction of improved assessment procedures has enabled staff to have an accurate view of pupils' progress in English and mathematics and has confirmed that standards need to be much higher. The school has fully accepted the need for change and has been receptive to informed professional guidance. With good support from LA consultants, subject leaders are increasing their understanding of strengths and weaknesses by scrutinising planning and pupils' work. However, the impact of their work is at an early stage. Staff and governors know there is more to do in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision. Further development is

required to ensure that everyone has the necessary skills to help accelerate the rate of learning and support the headteacher and governors in driving forward school improvement.

The school's post-Ofsted action plan is satisfactory. It addresses all the areas for development from the inspection report. The proposed actions are carefully mapped out, providing a clear, detailed plan of action. However, although start times are clearly identified, it is unclear when some actions will be completed. Success criteria are indicated on the plan but many are not specific enough to enable the school to measure success accurately. This is likely to make it difficult for the school to monitor progress. Resource costs are, in the main, identified but there is no indication of the source of the funding or the total cost to implement the plan. The school has thoroughly evaluated the actions taken in implementing this plan and the resulting self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is honest and accurate. Governors are better informed and are becoming more active in providing appropriate challenge to the leadership of the school. This is based on a developing knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- carry out rigorous monitoring of the school's performance to identify exactly where weaknesses are and take swift action to bring about improvement – satisfactory.

#### External support

The local authority has provided good support and challenge which has helped sustain the school's impetus for change and improvement. The local authority's statement of action is satisfactory. It includes relevant judgements about the need for the school in the locality. It recognises the need to improve the quality of education rather than consider its closure and provide structured support for governors. Action taken to support the school to date is clearly identified. The plan identifies appropriate support for the school in each area of improvement. Regular monitoring and evaluation activities are planned throughout the period of support, but some timescales need to be more specific in terms of when actions will be implemented or completed.

#### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the proportion of good teaching to further improve the rate of pupils' progress.
- Provide further opportunities for subject leaders and governors to monitor and evaluate the quality of pupils' learning throughout the school.
- Purchase and utilise reading resources in order to improve standards in reading.
- Ensure that the marking and presentation policies are consistently applied throughout the school.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston  
H M Inspector