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Mr M Tromans  
The Headteacher  
Nelson Junior and Infant School  
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Dear Mr Tromans

#### Ofsted Monitoring of Schools with Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 June 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the chair and vice-chair of governors, your deputy headteacher and link adviser, those teachers observed, and the pupils who talked to me.

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.

As a result of the inspection in November 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and achievement across the school so that pupils make more consistent progress
- improve the quality and consistency of teaching, adapting lessons to the particular needs of pupils and matching work to pupils' abilities
- improve assessment procedures so that action can be taken to remedy underachievement.

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 and in raising pupils' achievement.

Year 2 teacher assessments indicate a marked rise in standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In mathematics standards have risen from extremely low to close to the national average. Reading and writing standards have risen but pupils' attainment in both areas remains too low. More effective teaching and a curriculum that is better suited to pupils' needs explain the rising attainment in Year 2. Year 6 standards are predicted to be lower in 2007 than in 2006. The reason for the

difference is that the current cohort of pupils had much lower attainment on entry to Year 3 and the class has had many changes of teacher that have slowed the pupils' progress. Current school assessment data indicates that the proportion of pupils making satisfactory or better progress has increased since November 2006. The majority of pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in writing, although this is not the case in Year 4 where there is much catching up to do. In Years 2, 5 and 6 most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in mathematics but in other years around a third of the pupils have not made the expected progress over the past two terms. In reading pupils' progress is far too inconsistent. For example, in Year 3 all pupils have made at least satisfactory progress with two thirds making good progress. In Year 1 two thirds of the pupils have made satisfactory progress, a third good progress, and a third has not made the expected progress. The underachieving pupils will have to do well during the summer term to reach the targets set for them.

The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the quality and consistency of teaching. The proportion of satisfactory or better teaching has improved and the significant amount of inadequate teaching seen during the last inspection has largely been eliminated. The local authority (LA) inspected provision in May 2007 and judged that teaching in the Foundation Stage had improved and there was much more good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Better teaching is helping to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics. There are a number of reasons why teaching is more effective. Support, advice and guidance from literacy and numeracy consultants have improved teachers' subject knowledge and widened the range of teaching methods employed. Assessment information is now used effectively and this ensures that activities are better tailored to pupils' needs. Pupils say this increases their enjoyment of lessons. There is more effective deployment of additional support, particularly for those with learning difficulties, enabling them to make better progress. Teachers who were judged inadequate have improved because they have received the right kind of advice and targeted support. Enhanced teaching skills have led to better outcomes in class. There has also been the added benefit that during this academic year most classes have been taught by one teacher and this has helped provide continuity of learning. Whilst the picture is a positive one, there is no room for complacency as standards are not as high as they should be and significant underachievement remains in some years.

Satisfactory progress has also been made on the assessment issue. A sound tracking system has been developed that enables pupils' attainment and progress to be effectively monitored and data used to set suitable end-of-year targets. More robust moderation of standards, particularly in writing and the Foundation Stage, is helping to establish a secure baseline from which pupils' progress can be tracked with confidence. Assessment information is used effectively to inform intervention and improve lesson planning. For example, individuals that are judged to be underachieving are identified and provision modified so their rate of learning increases. Marking in mathematics and writing is constructive and developmental. This said, insufficient attention is paid to improving presentation skills and not enough is being done to ensure the older pupils write in a fluent, joined style. Pupils

are set targets and they know what National Curriculum level they are working at and what must be done to improve. Listening and speaking skills are not yet being formally assessed. As a result, it is difficult to judge how well pupils at the early stages of acquiring English are making progress in communicating.

The local authority has provided effective support since the school was given a notice to improve. The monitoring and intervention group (MIG) has provided adequate oversight of progress on each point for improvement. It is unfortunate that the chair of governors has not always been present at MIG meetings to provide her perspective on the school's improvement. The local authority advisers, who inspected the school in May, judged that the school had made satisfactory progress on each area for improvement. Inspection findings were fair and accurate. The first statement of action was not good enough. The revised one is satisfactory.

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

Yours sincerely

David Rzeznik  
Her Majesty's Inspector