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25 September 2007

Mrs P Allsopp  
The Headteacher  
Braunstone Frith Infant School  
Liberty Road  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE3 6NN

Dear Mrs Allsopp

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BRAUNSTONE FRITH  
INFANT SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Isobel Randall, Additional Inspector, to your school on 19 and 20 September 2007, 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 became subject to special measures in November 2006. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers (NQT) may be appointed subject to the following qualifications. The school must involve the local authority (LA) in the appointment process. The NQT should be mentored in school by a teacher of proven high quality. All NQT entitlements must be met in full. Appropriate internal and external development, support and induction must be provided.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report 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

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BRAUNSTONE FRITH INFANT SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 19 and 20 September 2007

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, a group of pupils, the chair of governors, governors from the school improvement group (SIG), the associate headteacher, and representative from the LA. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and pupils.

### Context

Since the last visit in May 2007, the school has been devastated by two tragic events. The much loved and valued school secretary died suddenly after a short illness. Secretarial duties are being fulfilled on a temporary basis until the governing body can make a suitable appointment. In addition, during the summer, a pupil was killed following a collision with a vehicle.

The substantive headteacher has returned to school following her accident. She is working in close partnership with the deputy headteacher. Two teachers have resigned and one NQT has been recruited. A new associate headteacher has been appointed to support the school. The LA has appointed two additional governors to support the existing members in school improvement. The new building work is not yet complete. The school does not now intend to move into the new building until after Christmas.

### Achievement and standards

Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were significantly better than those of the previous year. Improved teaching, higher expectations, and better use of assessment information have led to good improvements in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly at the higher levels. Challenging targets have been achieved in the main and, in some cases, exceeded. Despite this, standards overall remain below national averages, although the gap between school and national outcomes has closed significantly. Throughout the school increased numbers of pupils are making accelerated progress, particularly in reading. Rates of progress are improving in writing and mathematics with most now making satisfactory progress. However, some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making slower progress. A number of strategies have been effectively implemented and are beginning to improve successfully pupils' speaking and listening, reading and social skills, and their attitudes to learning. More time is needed for these to be well embedded and consistently applied throughout the school.

In lessons observed during this visit, most pupils made at least satisfactory progress with an increasing number doing better than that. Where learning was more active, pupils of all abilities made better progress. However, in those lessons judged satisfactory, a minority of pupils made slow progress. This was because the pace of

the lesson slackened or pupils had insufficient challenge. Systems for assessing pupils' work across the school are now regular and becoming well established. Good use of monitoring sheets during lessons helps identify which pupils have understood the focus of the activity. Outcomes are increasingly used to inform future planning. A wide range of questions are used to engage pupils and challenge their thinking. Target boards are displayed in all classes and working walls have been established, although little reference was made to them in lessons during this visit.

Although there has been some improvement in writing, there is still some way to go. Most pupils throughout the school are being given suitable opportunities to practise and consolidate their skills. However, gaps in knowledge and understanding mean some find it hard to increase their writing fluency and accuracy. Increasing confidence in spelling and the acquisition of a wider vocabulary are beginning to narrow the gap. In addition, although handwriting is improving, it is hampered by poor pencil grip and incorrect letter formation by some pupils. Standards in mathematics are below national expectations because many pupils are not confident in their number work and lack basic numeracy skills. They do not have the rapid recall of number bonds necessary to improve their rate of work and progress.

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

- make better use of assessment information to challenge the more able and ensure that pupils in Year 1 have suitable opportunities to practise and consolidate their learning, particularly in writing and mathematics – satisfactory.

#### Personal development and well-being

The school has developed further its efforts to encourage pupils to attend school and arrive on time. The range of breakfast clubs has been increased so that more pupils benefit from them. Parents are well informed about school issues so that they appreciate the importance of regular attendance. As a result, attendance has continued to improve, almost meeting target levels. School leaders are now trying to reduce the number of days lost because of family holidays. Pupils now understand the importance of punctual arrival with the result that, for example, on the first day of the monitoring visit only two pupils were late to school.

On the whole, pupils respond well to lessons and to play, although a small minority find it difficult to learn school routines. Teachers and support staff work hard with good understanding and sympathy to help such pupils to settle down.

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

- work more closely with parents and carers to promote good attendance – satisfactory.

#### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous visit. No inadequate lessons were seen on this occasion. Almost two fifths were good, with the majority of these in the Foundation Stage. Although teaching is at least

satisfactory in Key Stage 1, the quality needs to be consistently better than this if it is to accelerate rates of progress further. Some satisfactory but less effective lessons are characterised by slow pace that holds back the progress of higher attainers, whilst pupils with low levels of concentration lose interest. Lesson planning for literacy has improved. All teachers, led by the coordinator, now plan collaboratively to provide a coherent literacy programme that is increasingly meeting the needs of pupils. This is leading to some improvement in standards but has not yet compensated for previous low levels. Numeracy is now beginning to follow the same model. In both subjects, challenge for higher attainers has increased, but has yet to have full impact on their progress. Most pupils understand the purpose of their work because they discuss what they are about to learn at the start of each lesson. In the best lessons, the objectives are revisited at appropriate times to check if learning is on track. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses work well to help small groups and individuals, both in their work and in social interaction. This has a positive impact on development in both areas. The school marking policy is being universally applied. Teachers' marking now shows pupils where they can improve so that almost all are able to say what they need to do next. Comments are not always couched in terms that are immediately accessible to pupils, but teachers invariably explain and discuss what they are writing on work so that pupils understand.

The school has done everything possible to address issues identified at the last visit concerned with risk assessments, security of the site and safeguarding of pupils.

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

- ensure that all pupils have clear guidance about what they need to do to improve and get better – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

The school continues to concentrate on bringing about the necessary improvements. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have formed a strong partnership and are working together effectively. They are well supported by the senior management team (SMT). A new associate headteacher has recently been assigned to the school. She is beginning to increase her knowledge of the school and how she might support it. In addition, the SIG has been strengthened by the appointment of an experienced LA governor. A thorough evaluation of the school's raising attainment plan (RAP) has been undertaken and the outcomes used to construct a revised plan. Targets for 2008 have been revised and are now more challenging.

All staff remain committed to raising standards and improving the school. The implementation of the school's tracking system along with half termly meetings has increased staff's understanding of how well each pupil is progressing. Prompt action is now being taken to address any underachievement. This is leading to improved rates of pupils' progress. A broad range of monitoring and evaluation activities have been undertaken by subject leaders. They now have a good understanding of the impact of actions taken and are increasingly using the outcomes to plan for future improvements.

Some governors are beginning to develop their responsibilities and increase their understanding of the school by checking out things for themselves. However, too many governors are still reliant on the school or LA to provide them with information rather than gathering it first hand. Consequently, they do not have an accurate understanding of the issues facing the school or how well the school is addressing them. Training and support is planned. Two additional LA governors have recently been appointed but they are at a very early stage in their work with the school.

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

- improve the way pupils' progress is tracked to provide a better understanding of how well they are doing and ensure that whole school strategies are implemented fully and evaluated carefully to check for their effectiveness – satisfactory.

#### External support

The school has continued to benefit from effective targeted support from the LA. The LA standards inspector and consultants have made a good contribution to the progress made by the school. They give appropriate advice and guidance to staff and this has been beneficial in developing the skills of senior leaders as well as providing targeted support for individual teachers. The LA recognises that the level of support provided needs to reduce as the school increases its capacity to improve.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to increase the rate of pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.
- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good in Key Stage 1.
- Further develop the capacity of governors to fulfil their role in monitoring rigorously the work of the school.