

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



5 November 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**

Following my visit with John Eadie, Additional Inspector, to your school on 30 and 31 October 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 conditions. 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 KNIGHTON FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 30 and 31 October 2007

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leadership team, the chair and the vice-chair of governors, and a representative from the LA.

Context

Since the last visit in April 2007, two teachers have resigned their posts. One new teacher has been appointed from September 2007. Following recent interviews, governors were unsuccessful in filling the second vacancy because they felt the calibre of candidates was not high enough. In the meantime, the school has adjusted its internal staffing arrangements to ensure stability in teaching and learning for this class. To offset this, a supply teacher is teaching reading recovery lessons. In addition, a teacher is currently absent on long term sick leave. This class is currently being taught by a long term supply teacher. From September 2007, class organisation has been adjusted to form single year groups, apart from one mixed Year 5 and 6 class. Following the resignation of the mathematics subject leader, and until a suitable appointment can be made, the headteacher is temporarily overseeing the development of the subject. An assistant headteacher has been appointed internally with the role of developing inclusion throughout the school. Four governors have resigned their posts. Although they have managed to recruit two new members, the governing body currently does not have its full complement. The number of pupils on roll has remained stable at 205. The proportion of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English is increasing, as is the rate of pupil mobility. The school is participating in the local authority's communication, language and literacy development pilot project.

Achievement and standards

There were good improvements in standards by the end of the Foundation Stage in 2007. Higher proportions of pupils are achieving the expected standards particularly in reading, writing and recognition and writing of numbers. Areas of weakness remain in calculation, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. There were very good improvements in reading and writing at all levels by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2007. As a result, the gap between the school and national outcomes has narrowed. Challenging targets were, in the main, achieved with some writing targets exceeded significantly. Standards in mathematics were broadly similar to those achieved in 2006. Although targets were exceeded, standards remain below average. Considerable improvement is still required, particularly if pupils are to reach higher levels. Increasing numbers of pupils are beginning to make accelerated rates of progress through Key Stage 1.

Pleasing improvements were made in both English and science at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007. Attainment in both subjects was the highest achieved by the school for several years. Reading and writing outcomes improved significantly and challenging targets were achieved. Pupils made particularly good progress in reading throughout Key Stage 2. As a result, the school narrowed the gap with national outcomes appreciably. Similarly, there were good improvements in science. Despite this improvement, standards remain well below the national average. Standards in mathematics were disappointing and remain too low. The gap caused by the legacy of previous underachievement proved too great to close. Targets were not achieved by a considerable margin and outcomes remain well below the national floor target. Despite accelerating last year in Year 6, progress overall throughout Key Stage 2 was inadequate in writing, mathematics and science. In all subjects, boys achieved better than girls.

In the lessons observed during this visit, most pupils made satisfactory progress. An increasing number are now beginning to make accelerated progress. There are several reasons for this. Teachers are now better at planning to meet the needs of all abilities. They are increasing their expectations of most pupils and challenging them to improve. Lessons are increasingly active and practical which is engaging and sustaining pupils' interest. Despite these improvements, many pupils continue to work below national standards. In some of those lessons judged satisfactory, gaps in previous skills, knowledge and understanding prevent some pupils from making progress at the rate necessary to reach the objectives of the lesson and their targets. This is more evident in mathematics. Many pupils do not have a secure enough grasp of some basic number concepts and are often unable to select confidently the most appropriate strategy to work out problems. Scrutiny of books shows an improvement in the quality and quantity of recorded work. It is better where teaching is consistently good coupled with higher expectations. The whole school focus on presentation is beginning to pay dividends, although there are still isolated pockets of inconsistency. Pupils are taking an increased pride in their work. Throughout the school, many pupils are neither confident nor accurate spellers and punctuation is not always used correctly in extended writing.

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 – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

The school has continued its work to improve attendance, taking a strong line to address the problem of the hard core of families who keep their children off school. In this, the school has been supported well by the education welfare officer. The strategies implemented for these families, as well as other initiatives to encourage pupils to come to school more regularly, have been effective in improving attendance. It is considerably higher than it was at this time last year and is now above the national average. However, the punctuality of a number of pupils remains poor and initiatives to improve this have not been so successful. The improvements in pupils' personal development and well-being, noted at the last monitoring

inspection, have been maintained and pupils behave well and work hard. They play safely, being very aware of the needs of others. The work of the 'Young Leaders', who are trained to look after others during break times, is good and their role is appreciated by the younger children they look after.

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

- improve the pupils' attendance – satisfactory.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved since the last monitoring inspection. Almost half the lessons were good and no inadequate teaching was observed this time. Good teaching was typified by good planning, which presented a range of activities that involved and interested most pupils. However, although teachers are now planning more effectively for the range of abilities in their classes, the pitch of tasks is not always appropriate for some pupils, occasionally being too difficult and occasionally too easy. In addition, challenges for the more able are also not consistently high enough. The quality of marking is much improved. Pupils are given clear guidance about what they need to do next to get better. It is more effective when pupils are given time to read and respond to the improvement points. A strong feature of teaching throughout the school is the work of the teaching assistants. They play a full part in lessons, supporting pupils well, particularly those with learning difficulties and those who have English as an additional language.

The school has continued to improve the curriculum. The school day has been adapted so that the amount of taught time has increased. A significant sum has been spent on improving the stock of reading books. The school has monitored the effectiveness of its spending on these, which has been good, and is one of the reasons for pupils' improved progress in reading. A teaching assistant has been appointed mentor for the pupils with English as an additional language and she has made a good start at helping these pupils settle into school quickly and learn key English language skills. Good resources have also been purchased for these pupils' use in lessons, but teachers are not always planning to ensure that these pupils can be included in lessons.

The work to ensure that the school is a safe and healthy place for the pupils has continued. Governors have conducted a very thorough risk assessment of the school premises and are carrying out termly inspections to make sure that no other issues arise. They have addressed all the significant issues that this assessment raised and are well on their way to completing the list. Clear guidance is provided for all staff on child protection procedures and safe use of computers and the headteacher ensures that they fully understand the implications of these with regular updates.

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

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

Leadership and management

All staff and governors are determined and committed to school improvement and there remains a positive feel to the school. The very enthusiastic and dedicated headteacher is well supported by the committed and hardworking senior leadership team and governors. Between them, they have continued to focus sharply on improving teaching and raising standards. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and appropriate actions have been taken to bring about improvements. Initiatives are monitored thoroughly through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, and regular assessments. The school's tracking system to monitor pupils' achievement is detailed and makes sensible use of data. It provides the school with clear evidence of where there is underachievement and appropriate support has been provided where necessary. Standards in reading are improving as a result of staff training, the effective use of new resources, and successful strategies such as 'Reading Recovery' and 'Better Reading Partnership'. However, support has not always been sufficiently effective in bringing about improvements quickly enough. Although the progress made by many pupils is improving, there are still far too many pupils who are not making as much progress as they could, particularly in mathematics.

The development of middle managers has been impeded by the resignation of the subject leader for mathematics and the long term absence of the science and assessment coordinator. These responsibilities are being undertaken by the senior leadership team in the short term. Governors have tried very hard to recruit high quality teaching staff to the school and have been partially successful in this objective. The lack of key subject leaders is placing increasing strain on the senior leadership team. This will be further exacerbated early next term following the retirement of another core subject leader unless suitable appointments can be made. Governors now have a greater sense of purpose. Despite not having their full complement, they have re-evaluated their role and have identified areas where they need to become more effective. They have begun to visit the school to see for themselves how things are. Consequently, they are better informed in order to challenge the school.

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

There has been good quality training and guidance from literacy and numeracy consultants. The education welfare officer (EWO) and Special Needs Service (SNS) have also provided the school with good support. Additional financial support has

helped the school purchase much needed resources and help governors improve the fabric of the building. However, the unsatisfactory delay in identifying a new standards inspector has resulted in a time of uncertainty in the support for school leaders. In addition, the LA has been slow to communicate its response to issues and concerns raised by the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to improve rates of progress for all pupils throughout the school, particularly in mathematics.
- Endeavour to make suitable high quality teaching appointments and induct them appropriately into school.
- Continue to work to improve the punctuality of pupils.