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13 December 2007

Mr D Anderson  
Headteacher  
Sir Francis Hill Community Primary School  
Bristol Drive  
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Dear Mr Anderson

### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SIR FRANCIS HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Rajinder Harrison and Geof Timms, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 27 and 28 November, 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 January 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good progress

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good progress

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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 Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF SIR FRANCIS HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 27-28 November 2007

### Evidence

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

### Context

The school's new buildings for Nursery, Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes opened in September 2007.

### Achievement and standards

When the school was last inspected in January 2007, standards in English by the end of Year 6 were below average and pupils made inadequate progress. The school identified areas for improvement in pupils' reading and promptly put into place guided group work, reading journals and regular assessment of progress. These strategies led to improvement in the 2007 Year 6 results in National Curriculum tests. Standards in English were broadly in line with the national average and pupils made satisfactory progress from their starting points. However, the school's analysis of the test results indicated that key aspects of pupils' writing required improvement. Standards in mathematics also improved and were above average with pupils making good progress. Although results at the end of Year 2 fell slightly, pupils reached standards that were broadly average and made satisfactory progress overall. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because they enjoy being at school and learning. They start with knowledge and skills that are generally at the expected levels nationally, although their literacy skills are less secure.

In other year groups, the school's assessment data demonstrated that most pupils made the expected progress in reading during 2006/7 but up to a third did not make the expected progress in writing. This matches the findings from the analysis of Year 6 performance and the school has made the improvement of writing a priority for 2007/8. Strategies to make the teaching of writing more explicit and increase the profile of writing across other subjects have been put in place for this term.

In the lessons observed on this visit, pupils made satisfactory progress overall, although where teaching was strongest, progress was good. The school's analysis of assessment information for this year indicates that a majority of pupils are making progress in writing but it is too early to be certain whether this is in line with national expectations.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- improve progress in English, particularly in Years 3 to 6 – good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

Pupils' regular attendance and positive attitudes to learning show they enjoy school. They are polite, courteous and respectful of others. They behave well even when lessons are uninspiring. Pupils work well with others and enjoy many responsibilities. 'Playground buddies' take care of those who have no one to play with or are upset. The school parliament influences school improvement by, for example, deciding what play facilities to have. Pupils understand how to stay fit, safe and healthy. Through the many sporting activities on offer, they exercise regularly. In the Foundation Stage, the caring relationships the school fosters help children settle quickly and work confidently. They are safe and well looked after and those who need individual help are supported well. They make new friends quickly and behave well.

## Quality of provision

Since the last monitoring visit, teaching has continued to improve. All of the lessons observed were satisfactory and over half were good. Teachers use the newly introduced format for planning lessons which links pupils' prior attainment to the work to be completed. This has led to better matching of activities to pupils' needs in many classes but in some this is not yet secure and, in a few, all pupils still do mostly the same work.

In the better lessons, teachers have very good relationships with the class and set high expectations. They make clear what pupils should learn and plan carefully to help them achieve the purposes of the lesson by pitching work at levels which provide challenge for all. They use discussion well to ensure that pupils from the range of ability groups answer questions and they probe for explanations and justification of views. Pupils work well in pairs and groups in these lessons and show some independence in their learning. In these lessons, teachers use interactive white boards skilfully to make lessons interesting and to structure learning. Teaching assistants support targeted pupils well. Pupils are expected to review their progress against the purpose of the lesson and their targets. As a consequence, pupils make good progress. In the Foundation Stage, interesting activities, with a good balance between those that are adult-led and those the children choose, make learning fun. Effective teaching helps children progress well and achieve expected levels.

In the less effective lessons, teachers do not always explain to pupils what they are intended to learn from the lesson and often talk for too long so that some pupils lose concentration. The matching of work to pupils' needs is not as effective so that higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils not well enough supported. These lessons lack pace and some pupils did not complete the work set. Teachers do not promote discussion and questions are often answered by the small number of pupils who volunteer. Progress against the intentions of the lesson is not reviewed well enough, and, if it is, mainly by the teacher rather than the pupils. As a result, pupils depend too much on the teacher.

The new system for lesson planning requires teachers to review pupils' targets and needs when setting out what pupils are intended to learn and devising work. This is an improvement on the previous situation. Senior staff have monitored teachers' use of this planning format and it is generally consistent. However, its effectiveness

across classes is not yet even, with some teachers showing better understanding of how they should meet pupils' needs and provide challenge at different levels. This was particularly effective in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where four different groups of pupils covered a similar topic, with work set at their level, yet all were challenged to solve problems and think about the way they reached a solution.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and follow the school policy. They provide comments on the progress which pupils make and set targets for improvement. Marking for literacy is thorough. The targets still vary in quality, with the best clearly linked to pupils' overall targets as represented in the 'bookmarks' for writing and the reading journals. However, others are very general and more about effort than learning.

The school's curriculum provides pupils with sound opportunities to experience the full range of subjects. In addition, it provides older pupils with opportunities to learn a modern foreign language. The school timetables subjects in a very rigid way and this limits cross-curricular and thematic planning. The planning of English and mathematics has improved since the inspection and is now increasingly based on the most recent national guidance. There is a good range of clubs and other school activities, including sport, music and drama. In the Foundation Stage, classrooms are very stimulating and well resourced. The outdoor areas provide attractive space where children play and learn independently to explore and extend their skills.

Pupils feel safe, secure and well looked after at school. They know who to go to if they are worried or upset and know staff will help them. Those who are new to learning English are integrated well. Pupils with learning difficulties receive satisfactory support with external agencies involved where appropriate.

The school now has effective systems to check pupils' academic achievement. Regular assessments identify where pupils are falling behind and additional support is provided for these pupils. The data generated is very valuable for effective target setting. However, not all teachers make best use of this information to plan lessons. While all pupils have individual targets and understand what they have to do to achieve them, some teachers make little reference to these in the work they ask pupils to do or during lessons. As a result, some pupils do not achieve all that they could.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- improve curriculum planning by making full use of assessment information to provide the highest level of challenge for all pupils—satisfactory progress.

## Leadership and management

The school has worked hard to address the leadership and management issues arising from the last inspection in January 2007 and from the first monitoring visit in July. The work of leaders at different levels has been largely positive and has resulted in improved progress towards the targets in the school's action plan.

The headteacher, senior staff and subject coordinators monitor provision regularly. They observe lessons, scrutinise pupils' work and talk with pupils and with teachers. Analysis is carried out in some detail, largely by the deputy headteacher and subject or key stage coordinators. However, this evaluation is yet to have a full impact on classroom practice, such as in improving writing and providing work that is sufficiently challenging for all pupils. The subject coordinator for mathematics provides a good example of the effectiveness of evaluation. Her analysis of test results and other information identified a need to improve pupils' skills in interpreting data. This was then used as a basis for staff training. The subsequent monitoring of pupils' learning, together with feedback from teachers, showed improved performance in this area. The English coordinator has introduced effective strategies to improve reading and, more recently, strategies to improve writing. He is tracking pupils' progress using the regular assessment information provided by class teachers.

The school gathers and analyses data regarding pupils' progress but does not make sufficient use of the available technology to improve the efficiency and accuracy of this work. This means that staff are still unable to compile quick summaries of the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as higher achieving boys, or those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Because of this, the use of the data for leadership and management purposes is underdeveloped. However, the analyses that are undertaken are more closely linked to the setting of whole-school targets and to the local authority (LA) statement of action.

The headteacher has not yet provided a sufficiently coherent analysis of the overall progress by drawing together the separate evaluations of the school's work. Because of this, the school still lacks a sufficiently focused, clear, overall vision for its direction and its future improvement.

The governors have continued to build on the improvements made since the inspection. Their role in challenging the school and asking more specific questions has developed well. The training they have received has increased their confidence in reviewing, analysing and understanding data. The governing body is not yet provided with the coherent overall analysis needed to help them develop a clear vision for the future of the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- improve school leadership to ensure rigorous self evaluation focuses on the impact of initiatives to raise achievement – good progress.

## External support

The LA continues to provide effective support for the school. There has been good training in aspects of guided group work to improve reading and writing skills. The school improvement partner has undertaken joint lesson observations with senior staff. Governors have received training in the interpretation of assessment data from the additional governor appointed by the LA. The LA supports the school in assessing its progress against the key issues from the last inspection and this progress is reported to a joint meeting of senior staff, governors and local authority representatives.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Consolidate the strategies recently introduced to improve pupils' writing.
- Ensure that the quality of planning and teaching across classes is more consistent, by improving some teachers' understanding of how to pitch work to challenge all pupils.
- Ensure that the detailed evaluation of separate aspects of the school's work is combined to provide a coherent analysis of its progress and identify the key priorities for its future improvement.