

29 October 2007

Mr Fitzpatrick  
Headteacher  
Netherfield Primary School  
Chandos Street  
Netherfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG4 2LR

Dear Mr Fitzpatrick

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF NETHERFIELD  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Sue Aldridge, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10 and 11 October 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 – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may not 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 Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

David Martin  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF NETHERFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 10 and 11 October 2007

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' work and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject coordinators, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

### Context

Since the last visit the school has moved into a purpose built school in the locality, partly based on a refurbished and extended former building. There have been several changes to teaching staff.

### Achievement and standards

The school now has a valid baseline of assessment at the end of Key Stage 1. Previously unreliable teacher assessment at the end of Year 2 made it difficult to measure accurately the progress made by pupils by the end of Year 6. In 2007, teacher assessment in mathematics was a little higher, and in reading was a little lower than in 2006. Writing assessment was much lower than in 2006, but more accurately reflects the greatest area of weakness in achievement in the school.

At Key Stage 2, in 2007, English results were maintained at 2006 levels but mathematics results rose by 10% and science results rose to their previous high levels after a dip in 2006. As a result, the progress made by pupils was much improved but still probably in the lower quartile of all schools nationally. These unvalidated results were in line with those predicted by school assessment information. This shows that the school is more accurately tracking the progress of pupils against national expectations. Now that Key Stage 1 assessments are more reliable, it is also in a position to track progress against individual pupil potential. Optional tests are now used to validate teacher assessment of progress. The 'visual mapping' of progress by leaders and managers and all class teachers is helping to identify underperformance and give appropriate support to those most in need.

The performance of boys is still weaker than for girls, especially in writing. This is being addressed in part through the identification and support for of target groups of pupils who are failing to reach their potential in each class. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Progress seen in lessons observed during the visit was usually satisfactory and sometimes good. This was directly related to the quality of teaching seen during the lesson.

### Judgement

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

- Raise achievement in English, mathematics and science by using assessment information to ensure that learning builds on previous knowledge and skills – satisfactory

### Personal development and well-being

The move to the new school building has had a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes. They very much appreciate the quality of the learning and play areas in the school as well as the improved social facilities and toilets. They report that they feel safe because the playground is more easily monitored. They have a new pride in their school and teachers report that behaviour has improved. During the inspection behaviour was very good both in school and around the grounds. Because of the new building and the improvements in the learning environment and in teaching, pupils obviously enjoy their learning a great deal more than previously. They report that they can concentrate now that they have more room and pleasant surroundings. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and are very aware of the need to make healthy lifestyle choices. The new school is very much at the centre of the town and has a community room specifically to encourage engagement with parents and other local groups. Attendance is still below average but the school is working hard to discourage absence from school. There have been no permanent and only two temporary exclusions in the last year, and none since the last monitoring visit. Improved results at the end of Year 2 indicate that more pupils are now developing the basic skills in literacy and numeracy that are essential for their future lives, although information and communications technology (ICT) is still underused.

### Quality of provision

There has been satisfactory improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection. Monitoring and support from subject leaders, advanced skills teachers and local authority personnel has helped to secure improvement. As a result, inadequate lessons are rare. Teachers now make use of accurate assessment information to plan tasks that provide a suitable challenge for most pupils. Staff have started to track pupils' progress and identify those that are falling behind. Support is well targeted so that pupils most in need receive help. Teaching assistants are well briefed and they provide the right amount of support, enabling pupils to move forward and experience success. On a few occasions, higher attaining pupils are not stretched as much as they might be, although this is less the case than it was previously. Questioning, and the involvement of pupils in identifying their level of confidence and understanding, helps teachers to identify which pupils need immediate help in lessons.

Academic guidance has been strengthened. The use of 'layered targets' is now better established and marking is much more consistent so pupils are clear about what their learning goals are and what they need to do to improve. In the best practice, it is thorough and diagnostic and a dialogue between pupil and teacher develops in books so that pupils correct their mistakes. In some classes, pupils have personal targets

too. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace and many teachers use timed tasks to create a sense of urgency and keep pupils' motivation high. The move to the new building has meant that teachers all have interactive white boards and they use these widely, although they are not yet exploiting their full potential. With the new ICT suite not yet fully operational though, opportunities for pupils to use ICT as a learning tool across all subjects are presently limited. A concerted effort to improve teachers' science subject knowledge has improved science teaching, although a few weaknesses remain in designing investigations.

Pupils are very pleased with their new school building. In the Foundation Stage, all children now have access to a high quality, well-resourced outdoor play area and covered 'classroom'. Staff make effective use of all the space and the indoor environment is vibrant and stimulating. They provide a good range of opportunities across all areas of learning and teaching is good. Arrangements to support pupils in making the transfer from Reception to Year 1 have been revised and are informed well by consultations with pupils and parents. The Foundation Stage leader is leading well the early stage in developing a more appropriate and creative curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is well supported by a link with a successful infants' school. Year 1 teachers are now planning together to ensure that pupils in this year who need to continue to work on the Foundation Stage curriculum have the opportunity to do so.

The quality of care and support has been maintained since the last inspection. The day-to-day care of pupils is good. Deployment of staff reflects pupils' needs. For instance, this year pupils who moved up to Year 3 are being taught by the same teacher that they had last year in order to maintain academic momentum.

### Judgement

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by: providing more challenge; improving teachers' knowledge of science and by enabling pupils to reach their short term targets - satisfactory
- Provide a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and interests, particularly in Key Stage 1 - satisfactory

### Leadership and management

The headteacher has provided a clear strategic plan from the previous visit, but few actions are planned beyond the end of autumn term. This short-term planning has helped core subject coordinators to prepare, implement and evaluate improvements in provision. They have approached their devolved responsibilities with vigour, raising their profile and strengthened their role in the school as middle leaders. There is now a pressing need to consider long, medium and short term strategic planning that draws together the Ofsted action plan and Intensifying Support Programme into a coherent, limited number of school priorities. This strategic plan lacks a clear timescale for implementation so that key staff are aware of how their own area of responsibility is to progress over time.

Similarly, senior managers do not have a sufficiently developed whole-school role. This is particularly true in terms of devolving the leadership of school priorities and the formal line management of middle leaders. The headteacher is presently insufficiently engaged in the 'Intensifying Support Programme' and needs to play a more prominent role in strategically managing developments.

The improved use of assessment and data has had an impact on raising standards through identifying pupils at risk of underperformance and in need of more intensive support and intervention. The school's own monitoring of improvements, especially in core subjects, has improved greatly. The evaluation of lessons by senior managers closely matches that of the school adviser in paired observations and of the inspection team at this visit. Self-evaluation, although improved, still needs to be realistic about the progress made and the distance still to travel. A key development will be to build capacity within the school to sustain improvements and to increasingly rely less on external support.

The headteacher and all staff have worked tirelessly to arrange the move to the new building, the second move for many in the last couple of years. That they have quickly established such a good learning environment and made the most of the motivation that such a wonderful building has produced is greatly to their credit. Considering this welcome distraction, progress in other aspects has been remarkably good since the last visit.

### Judgement

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

Strengthen leadership and management by more effective delegation of responsibilities and rigorous monitoring evaluation of teaching, learning and pupils' progress – satisfactory

#### External support

Since the last visit the support to the school has increased significantly and is now good. The School Improvement Adviser provides a good level of support and challenge and has been involved in joint observations and other monitoring with senior managers. There has recently been an increased focus on learning outcomes as well as on teaching styles and approaches. The focus of support has increasingly been to build capacity from within the school, partly through helping to develop the role of core subject coordinators. At the same time the local authority (LA) has negotiated effective external support. An Advanced Skills Teacher has begun to work effectively alongside school staff in delivering high quality lessons. The school is part of an Intensifying Support Programme that is providing support at all levels in the school. There is a separate action plan for this activity that is starting to influence development activity in the school.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that classroom monitoring focuses more sharply on learning outcomes.
- Develop the whole-school roles of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher in leading priorities for whole school development and in supporting and coaching middle leaders.
- Create a medium term strategic plan that draws together key priorities and creates a timescale for implementation.