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14 December 2007

Mrs Wyn Arnold
Langley Mill Junior School
Bailey Brook Crescent
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Nottingham
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Dear Mrs Arnold

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF LANGLEY MILL
JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Michael Lafford, Peter Lawley and Trevor Watts, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 10 December 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 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 – good

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Derbyshire

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne
H M Inspector Education, Learning and Skills

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF LANGLEY MILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 10 December 2007

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, observed lessons, met with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, two representatives from the governing body including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the last monitoring visit on 19 and 20 June 2007, the school has undergone further staffing changes. The senior leadership structure has changed. The former Headteacher left the school in July 2007 and an Acting Headteacher was appointed for one term from September 2007. A new permanent Headteacher has been appointed from January 2008. There is a new member of staff in Year 3; the rest of staffing remains the same, with one of the seconded teachers still remaining in Year 6. One of the senior leadership team no longer has class teaching responsibility herself but provides continuity of supply cover and planning, preparation and assessment time for all members of staff across the school. This enables her to fulfil her role as assessment co-ordinator as she is able to monitor pupils' progress more accurately across the school.

The school continues to receive extensive support from a number of LA advisors. The school continues to work closely with an educational welfare officer who works to improve attendance. She visits school one day each week working with children who do not attend often enough and their families.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement and standards of work remain inadequate, although suitable steps are now being taken to tackle weaknesses. Learning and progress throughout the school are inconsistent. Although pupils' speaking and listening skills are improving and broadly satisfactory, progress in writing has declined from the previous year and is now inadequate. Strategies to tackle this by supporting writing across the subjects have not been in place for long enough to have the desired effect on standards. In contrast, there are examples of positive developments to improve writing in the specifically

designated literacy lessons. Lower attaining girls continue to underachieve when compared with other groups because the school has not yet found ways to engage them actively or to ensure their regular attendance. In general, the school is making good progress towards finding ways to tackle underachievement. These are based upon much improved monitoring of pupils' progress and regular analyses of cases of underachievement by individual pupils and groups of pupils. As a result, the school now takes prompt action to change the focus of teaching so that teachers tackle weaknesses in learning before they become embedded.

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

- Raise standards, particularly for the girls, in reading, mathematics and science – satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development is good because they have willingly taken on board many of the initiatives that the school has put forward. Pupils have an increasingly positive attitude to school; they say they like their lessons and enjoy learning. They are often well involved in their own learning, including assessing how well they have met their targets for a lesson, and how well they are making progress in the longer term. Their keenness to learn does not yet show fully in all pupils' attendance, which is still not as good as expected, despite the school's strong efforts made to encourage better attendance and punctuality. Rates of absence remain as at the last monitoring visit at around 94%. There were many pupils absent or late on the day of the monitoring visit, although the inspection team are satisfied with the school's procedures for following this up and ensuring latecomers settle into lessons with a minimum of fuss.

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

- Take stringent measures to improve pupils' attendance – satisfactory progress

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last monitoring visit, but there is still some which is barely satisfactory or inadequate. The school has placed strong focus on improving classroom practice through professional development and the monitoring of lessons. This work is starting to bear fruit because a higher proportion of teaching is now good. More teachers plan their lessons to allow pupils to work in pairs or

groups and activities are more varied. External support and the sharing of expertise have ensured that teachers have clearer and higher expectations of their planning and delivery. They are more aware of what constitutes a successful lesson. They now make better use of assessment information in their planning. The marking of work is regular, but pupils are not routinely told how they can improve their work. There is still insufficient focus on literacy skills across the curriculum and expectations of presentation are variable. In all classes there are very good relationships between the adults and pupils as well as amongst the pupils. This means there is good capacity to improve pupils' learning experiences.

In the weaker lessons, the activities do not sufficiently match the needs and prior learning of the pupils. The content is not sufficiently interesting and engaging, and, as a consequence, pupils do not learn as well as they should. Expectations of pupils' learning and progress are too low in these lessons and not enough attention is paid to assessing whether the learning objectives have been met. When lessons are satisfactory, they are suitably planned and proceed with reasonable pace. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to focus pupils' attention. Although the content of these lessons is generally interesting, teachers tend to be the focus of the activities, not allowing pupils enough opportunities to work independently. Sufficient time is now given to plenary sessions in most lessons, and some teachers are making use of this time to assess what pupils have learned and to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills further. The best lessons have clear objectives which are shared with pupils and cater well for differing needs. There is a purposeful working environment, where pupils frequently take responsibility for their own learning. These lessons contain a range of interesting and challenging activities and pupils work very well in collaboration with others. Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used imaginatively to improve pace and interest.

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

- Improve teaching, the use of assessment, raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, and ensuring that teaching time meets the recommended requirements – satisfactory progress
- Develop the pupils' independent learning and involve them in their lessons – good progress

Leadership and management

Staffing has now been secured. The leadership team are continuing to contribute very well to the direction of the school, and have prioritised effectively, with a drive to improve teaching and learning and work towards

improving standards and achievement. The Acting Headteacher has provided the necessary steer for the school and motivated the team. Her insightful management of structures and procedures and maintaining the focus of the priorities has been effective in the beginnings of school improvement. The school continues to receive good commitment and support from the remaining staff. The co-ordinating role for ICT has been temporarily filled.

The LA has supported the school very well in every respect since the last monitoring visit. The quality of teaching is improved since the last visit, although there is still a large proportion of satisfactory teaching and not all good practice is yet sufficiently embedded. The leadership team and the LA have continued to monitor lessons and lesson planning, which is beginning to have a positive impact. The school continues to work at this. There is now a greater proportion of lessons where pupils learn independently, which is beneficial to their enjoyment of lessons and to their progress.

The school now has plentiful data available, as systems are in place and have been well maintained to regularly track pupils' progress. The school is now using this more effectively to provide pupils with appropriate targets and to tailor the planning more specifically to pupils' needs. The impact of better assessment is that staff are now better informed. The school continues to work hard at improving pupils' writing skills and on raising the achievement of lower attaining girls. Work has been moderated by staff and the LA. There has been an investment in training staff to moderate work and level work accurately. There is more work to do on this. Advice given to pupils does not yet enable them to understand fully the level they are working towards or how to get there. More has been done to enable pupils to access ICT across the curriculum, but this is in early stages.

The leadership team and governors, working in conjunction with the LA, have accurately identified where improvement needs to be embedded, and further areas for immediate and sustained development. Some new strategies are securely in place and there is good progress in three of the areas for improvement identified at the initial inspection. The school has not made sufficient progress overall, but has made good progress since the last monitoring visit. Staff are implementing the necessary actions, and this has been effectively monitored by the school and the governors, so the school is clearer about the progress it has made and evaluating the impact of any action taken. Consequently, action taken is now beginning to make a difference, although it is still too early to impact on raising standards and achievement or to ensure that all teaching is good. Senior leaders realise the significance of their role in raising standards and modelling by example, and have received continuing support this term to enable them to do this. School self evaluation is up-to-date.

The governing body is making effective progress in understanding its role and in more rigorously challenging the school and holding the school to account. It has received further training and support from the LA and has begun to take a more strategic overview of the future direction and organisation of the

school. Governor meetings are significantly more focussed and the governing body are now well informed. There is now a thorough system of risk assessment carried out and the school continues to comply with recent safeguarding guidance.

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

- Improve the leadership and management so that there is an energetic drive for raising standards, rigorous monitoring of the provision and focussed strategic planning that tackles all weaknesses rapidly – good progress
- Ensure that the school takes account of all statutory requirements for health and safety – good progress

External support

The external support provided for the school by the LA has been increased further since the last monitoring visit and has been good. The LA works hard to continue to help the school to identify, and remain focussed on, the key areas for improvement. The LA recognises that consistency of the quality of teaching and learning and sustaining school leadership remain major priorities for improvement. The school continues to take part in the intensified support programme (ISP). It is encouraging that, because the level of support from the LA has been particularly extensive, the school is now beginning to benefit from the impact of this strategic support, although it has not yet had a significant impact on achievement and standards.

Priorities for further improvement

The priorities for further improvement remain as at the last monitoring visit, but priorities 1, 4 and 5 only require maintaining rather than significant further development.

- Improve the leadership and management of the school at all levels, ensuring that priorities are more swiftly and effectively dealt with to bring about change.
- Raise achievement and standards by ensuring that assessment information is more effectively used to plan lessons which are accurately matched to the needs of learners.
- Ensure that the quality of lessons is consistently good and opportunities for independent learning improve significantly across the school.
- Maintain the procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance.
- Continue to ensure that the system of risk assessment contributes to keeping pupils safe and take action where necessary.