

13 December 2007

Mrs A Lant  
Headteacher  
Totley Primary School  
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Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Lant

### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF TOTLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Les Schubeler, Additional Inspector, to your school on December 11 and 12, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in May 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed without prior agreement from the monitoring inspector.

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 Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services for Sheffield.

Yours sincerely

James Kilner  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF TOTLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 11 and 12 December 2007

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and 14 lessons or part lessons, and scrutinised documents and a sample of pupils' work. Meetings were held with the headteacher, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, the chair of the governors' progress committee, the school's link adviser, who is also the school's improvement partner, and the head of the partnership school.

### Context

From September this year a new deputy headteacher has taken up post. With the exception of the Year 4 class, all teachers have permanent contracts. A new middle management team of core subject leaders has been formed. The local authority has secured the partnership of the headteacher from a successful neighbouring school.

### Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement remains unacceptably low in Years 3 and 4. The work of consultants and training from the local authority has increased teachers' confidence in assessment and target setting. However, not all teachers are fully proficient in the use of this information, leading to some over-generous assessments which skew the true picture for the whole school. Consequently, where pockets of less effective teaching remain, pupils' progress is stubbornly slow. An analysis of pupils' answers in the Year 6 tests for 2007 highlighted significant weaknesses in pupils' abilities to handle data in mathematics. This is reflected throughout the school. Subject leaders have rightly linked this to pupils' poor performance in science. They are tackling these deep-seated problems through a programme of training, revised work schemes and classroom monitoring. Further identified priorities are designed to improve pupils' standards in reading and writing, particularly in Key Stage 2.

### Quality of provision

Senior leaders now monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Good quality support for those teachers still requiring improvement has come from outside consultants and the local authority. The work of consultants, particularly in mathematics, is equipping teachers with the skills they need to improve their practice. Teachers from the partnership school offer advice and support for weaker teaching at classroom level. As a result, a higher proportion of lessons are now good or better, but pockets of teaching which are barely satisfactory remain. These lessons are often exemplified by low expectations and lack of pace, as, for example, when too much time is taken up copying lesson objectives into exercise books.

Pupils' progress is now systematically monitored through the regular recording of assessments in English, mathematics and science. The school has introduced an improved, robust system for the tracking of pupils' progress. Teachers have a clearer

understanding of pupils' current standards and the rates of progress that they should make. This system is relatively new and is yet to have a measurable impact on pupils' standards. However, the data is used to identify the groups of pupils who need extra support, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented.

There is some good practice, but inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work persist throughout the school. Teachers miss opportunities to make reference to individuals' targets and fail to let pupils know often enough what they need to do next to raise the standard of their work. Learning targets are set for all pupils, and most now have a good understanding of what those targets are. However, many still do not understand how to use the targets to check and improve their own work.

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

- Improve teaching and learning to raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 – satisfactory
- Ensure that tracking and assessment procedures are rigorously and consistently applied by all staff so that underachievement is tackled earlier – satisfactory

### Leadership and management

Self-evaluation is honest and accurately reflects the progress the school has made since the inspection in May 2007. A high-calibre deputy headteacher has been appointed, providing an exemplary role model for the quality of teaching and bringing strength to the leadership team. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for subject leaders, who are poised to begin monitoring lessons and scrutinising work.

Since the start of the autumn term, the leadership team has begun more systematic monitoring and analysis of the work of the school. With support from the local authority and the partnership school, classroom observations, data analysis and governors' training have all served to target the issues identified for improvement. The school sets ambitious targets for pupils, although the accuracy of some teachers' assessments is skewing the actual picture of progress.

Governors are beginning to hold the school to good account. A protocol for their role when monitoring in school has been agreed, ready for implementation. They are now knowledgeable about data on achievement and standards and are confident when challenging the leadership team. The strength of the partnership between the headteacher and governors is creating a climate where teachers feel more accountable for their role in raising standards throughout school.

Strategic planning has improved, although success criteria do not consistently refer to quantifiable outcomes for pupils. As a result, it is difficult for the school to judge the impact of initiatives on achievement and standards.

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

- Improve leadership and management at all levels in order to bring about the required improvements in standards and achievement – satisfactory

#### External support

The local authority has set an optimistic timescale for the removal of the school from special measures in four terms. Partnership with a successful neighbouring school has been instrumental in providing good quality support at leadership and classroom level. Training for governors, assisting in monitoring quality of teaching and in-classroom support are bringing about much-needed improvements. External support from the local authority and outside consultants provides good quality training for class teachers in the use of assessment and strategies to improve classroom practice. The role of the school's improvement adviser is combined with that of school improvement partner. Termly reviews by the school's intervention adviser assess the impact of local authority support and external consultancy. Half-termly steering group meetings, attended by all departments in the local authority concerned with the improvement of the school, prioritise support ensuring efficient deployment of resources.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that strategic planning contains quantifiable success criteria based on measurable outcomes for pupils.