

23 January 2008

Mr Mark Scotton, Headteacher  
Pinxton Kirkstead Junior School  
Kirkstead Road  
Pinxton  
Nottinghamshire  
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Dear Mr Scotton

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF PINXTON KIRKSTEAD SCHOOL

Following my visit with Additional Inspectors John Brennan and John Foster to your school on 22 and 23 January 2008, 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 July 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*.

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 Education for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne  
H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF PINXTON KIRKSTEAD JUNIOR

## SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 23 January 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, previous acting headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

### Context

Since the school went into special measures, a temporary acting headteacher was appointed for one term. A substantive headteacher has been in post from the beginning of this term and initially continues to be supported this term by the previous acting headteacher. Last term there was considerable collaboration by these two people.

### Achievement and standards

The school has concentrated its efforts on improving standards in writing and the signs are that strategies devised to do this are working, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils of all abilities are gaining an increasing knowledge of the features of different types of writing and are improving their writing through drafting and redrafting their efforts. Much still remains to be done to make up for lost ground and to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Current school data shows that there are still significant numbers of pupils who are not progressing quickly enough. Shortcomings in systems to track pupil's progress in mathematics and science have a negative impact on the ability of the school to improve the achievement of higher attaining pupils and to turnaround a declining picture of standards in science. There is no easily accessible data that illuminates standards in each year group or the progress being made by all and differing groups of pupils. The results of the national tests in 2007 reveal that in mathematics standards were again average, as has been the case for the last four years. However, standards were below the national average in English and, to a lesser extent, in science. In both these subjects the proportion of pupils gaining the above average Level 5 was lower than the national average. Taking account of pupils' starting points, the amount of progress this group made was inadequate in mathematics and science. From the lessons seen during the visit and from work in books, pupils are making reasonable progress in acquiring basic skills. However, for all pupils, but especially higher attaining pupils, their ability to solve mathematical problems and to think, and act, as scientists lags behind.

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

- Raise standards in English, especially in writing - *satisfactory*
- Eliminate underachievement among higher attaining pupils - *inadequate*

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour is good overall and at times exemplary. Some pupils become restless when they have been listening for too long or if the subject matter or activities are not sufficiently interesting or draw on their own knowledge and experiences. Attendance remains slightly above average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to take an active part in school life.

### Quality of provision

Since the previous inspection, where the judgement for teaching and learning was inadequate, there have been moves to improve the teaching. As a result, most teachers are now sharing the objectives for each lesson with their pupils and so the pupils are thus more aware of what they are to learn in the lesson. Using this information they can more clearly identify when they have done well in meeting or exceeding the targets set for them. Teachers in some classes are now using more effective methods to involve pupils in their learning and pupils respond well, though this is inconsistently applied across the school. In some lessons, the teachers still talk for too long to the whole class and pupils are not involved well enough in these lessons. The quality of teachers' planning, whilst it has improved since the previous inspection, is variable across the school and is not yet aimed well enough at the pupils' learning needs. Too often the lesson plans cover the whole year group and are not focussed sufficiently on the previous learning or knowledge of the specific group being taught. The school has begun to consider more carefully the learning needs of the more able, but recognise that their general strategies for improving teaching and organising pupils has yet to address their specific needs as a group. The identification of these pupils and the monitoring of their progress, and thus adapting teaching appropriately for them, is therefore still at an early stage.

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

- Improve teaching, particularly by making a thorough evaluation of its impact on learning – *satisfactory*

### Leadership and management

Since the last inspection, the acting headteacher has worked determinedly to bring structure and effective management systems into the school. Changes to the school timetable and curriculum have ensured that teaching is focussed to provide the right learning environment for the pupils. Systems of tracking pupils' progress are now in place in literacy and numeracy, enabling the school to have an accurate view of individual pupils. However, senior leaders are not yet effectively using all the information available to gain a whole school overview or specific information about particular groups of pupils.

The substantive headteacher has been working collaboratively with the previous acting headteacher up to this point. The management structure of a headteacher with three assistant headteachers is also to change in the near future. The governing body, whilst supportive of the school, have not been sufficiently proactive in helping the school to improve, nor do they have an accurate view of the progress the school is making. This is because they remain too far removed and do not all fully

understand their roles in helping to monitor the school effectively and hold it to account.

The school's vision is clear and there is much more focus to all that goes on, including the regular meetings structure. Monitoring of teaching and learning is underway, although is not sufficiently focussed to have significantly improved practice across all year groups. However, coordinators of some subjects, such as English, have made some good headway and some beneficial support has been applied where necessary. The school uses its improvement plan well to focus on the priorities and to evaluate its progress. It has made satisfactory progress in two of the three other areas for improvement and worked towards this effectively. However, it rightly recognises that not all initiatives are sufficiently embedded or yet consistent across the school.

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

- Improve leadership and management at all levels ensuring the school is given clear direction and set high expectations in relation to raising standards and achievement – *satisfactory*

### External support

The quality of the external support committed to the school by the LA has been good, although its impact has yet to be fully realised in all of the areas identified for improvement. In the autumn of 2006, the LA initially recognised the school as requiring their supporting improvement programme. It also accurately identified two of the areas subsequently identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement and begun to work with the school on raising attainment in writing and of the more able pupils. The progress in raising standards in writing has been successful although this has taken the focus away from some of the other subjects. The work with the potential high attainers has yet to have made a significant impact, although the LA is planning now for the next phase in taking this further forward. The LA has, however, done some sterling work in developing the leadership and whole staff team and in introducing good practices in the classroom to aid improved learning. This is beginning to bear fruit and has contributed to some improvements in teaching, although it is yet not consistent across the school.

The LA has followed its statement of action appropriately and has rightly focussed its energies on helping to provide a secure management structure and developing the staff and governing body. It has monitored the implementation of the school's action plan well and contributed significantly to monitoring teaching and learning and standards and achievement across the school. The LA's evaluation of the school's progress is accurate and it has also ensured, through self evaluation, that the school has a mostly accurate view of itself. There is a rightful sense of urgency and a joint determination of the local authority, staff and governors to turn the school around. The timescales are rigorous but realistic and have thus been prioritised well.

### Priorities for further improvement

These remain as at the last Section 5 inspection.