

6 March 2007

Mrs A Lant
Headteacher
Totley Primary School
Sunnyvale Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S17 4FB

Dear Mrs Lant

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF TOTLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Judy Jones, Additional Inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 March 2008, 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 May 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

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

Yours sincerely

Jamie Kilner
H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF TOTLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 4 and 5 March 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and 15 lessons or part lessons, 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 progress committee, the school's link adviser, who is also the school's improvement partner, and the head of the partnership school.

Context

Following the resignation of the Year 3 teacher a replacement has been recruited from the partnership school. She will take up her post in April 2008. The governors have made the sensible decision to retain the current staffing levels for the summer term in order that the Year 1 pupils retain their current teacher.

Achievement and standards

Improvements to the quality of teaching, together with more thorough pupil tracking, have led to improvements in achievement and standards. More pupils at Key Stage 2 are achieving their predicted targets in English and mathematics with some pupils showing signs of exceeding them. The school has analysed previous end of Key Stage 2 assessments in order to identify specific gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. This information is paying dividends so that all year groups are now taught the appropriate programmes of study. An external consultant is working with all staff to review the curriculum and teaching of science throughout the school. This work is proving effective in raising standards in the subject although there is still some way to go in order that more pupils, particularly in lower Key Stage 2, reach the expected levels. The intense work and support for improving pupils' reading and writing skills has proved to be beneficial so that standards are now above average.

Quality of provision

Good coaching techniques and honest evaluation have been successful in eliminating all elements of unsatisfactory teaching. There is now a sustained pattern of mainly good or better teaching throughout the school.

The school's assessment and tracking system has been in operation long enough now to show measurable improvement in achievement, particularly in Year 6. It is also effective in identifying children with exceptional needs or talents earlier and the school is responding well to making the required individual provision. The assessment process is enabling teachers to match the work to pupils' individual levels, so that all are suitably challenged. Pupils are given relevant and achievable targets that amount to good advice about how to improve their work. This is reinforced by detailed marking, so that pupils know when they have achieved their targets and what they should do next. Teaching supports pupils' awareness of their

own progress and lessons now conclude with an effective review when pupils share ideas and identify the things that have helped them to do well. Pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, can discuss their targets knowledgeably and enjoy seeing how they are doing and what they have to do to improve.

The school continues to make good use of external advice from the local authority (LA) and others to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. At present there are some inconsistencies in the way teachers gather and record day-to-day assessments but individual methods are rigorous and teachers are well prepared for the common system to be introduced next term. There has been training in the use of this system and some teachers are already trialling it. More training is planned.

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 – good
- Ensure that tracking and assessment procedures are rigorously and consistently applied by all staff so that underachievement is tackled earlier – good

Leadership and management

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is resolute in her determination to ensure sustainable improvements throughout school. Together with the governing body, the school has been successful in tackling the weaknesses in teaching. This is bringing about the improvements in the standards reached by pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2 where underachievement was most marked. The senior leadership team is effective in assisting the headteacher in the management of the school. They are fully involved in working with the governing body through committees and regular meetings. The senior leadership team have a full knowledge of all budgetary and staffing decisions and this contributes effectively to action planning and monitoring. They conduct pupil progress review meetings and hold teachers to good account for the levels and targets reached by pupils in their class.

Together with subject leaders they monitor pupils' work through regular scrutinies which take a specific focus each half term. This has been a major factor in improving the way in which teachers mark pupils' work and guide them to the higher levels. Classroom monitoring is now a regular feature of school life with joint observations undertaken with external consultants and the LA. Leaders are in a strong position to fulfil the next part of their strategic plan for solo lesson observations.

Action planning has improved with clear success criteria linked to outcomes for pupils. In this way the school is becoming increasingly skilled in its ability to measure the success of all initiatives. Governors work in close partnership with school leaders but now present a good degree of challenge. The governing body has detailed records of their meetings through good quality minutes which are regularly reviewed for to ensure prompt action. The work of the progress committee ensures that actions taken to remove the school from special measures are thoroughly scrutinised and evaluated as to their levels of success. Difficult decisions on staffing have not

been shirked so that, along with school leaders, the governors ensure that the needs of the pupils are paramount. A sensible decision to retain current staffing levels through the summer term has served to ensure continuity of provision for the Year 1 pupils.

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 – good

External support

Work with the partnership school continues to be effective. Joint training, paired lesson observations and coaching have all been instrumental in the identified improvements. There is a commitment from the LA to fund the partnership until the school is removed from special measures. The support from LA consultants provides for some of the school's needs. For example, the work of the LA assessment consultant is proving effective, but support for literacy is less effective and is under review. The school has secured external consultants for mathematics and science which will be funded by the LA. Half termly meetings by the LA steering group are effective in monitoring all support given to the school.