

27 February 2008

Mrs Coy  
Springfield Junior School  
Springfield Road  
Swadlincote  
Derbyshire  
DE11 0BU

Dear Mrs Coy

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SPRINGFIELD  
JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Mike Best, Additional Inspector, to your school on 12-13 February 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 – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

No additional 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 Strategic Director for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely



H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF SPRINGFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 12-13 February 2008

### Evidence

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

### Context

Since the last visit one teacher has left to take up a teaching post at another school. One teacher has tendered her resignation and will be leaving the school at the end of term. Since November one teacher has been absent due to long term sickness.

### Achievement and standards

In Year 6, standards are just below average in English, mathematics and science. Most children in Year 6 are making good progress in lessons and, as a result, are catching up on lost ground in earlier years. More able children in this year group are making good gains in mathematics and reaching the higher levels because they are confidently applying and using their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding in different situations.

In other year groups, standards range from just below to below average. Achievement continues to vary. Although progress in most lessons is satisfactory, children are not making consistently fast enough progress.

### Personal development and well-being

Most children behaved well in lessons and around the school but a small minority were unsettled when the teaching did not fully engage or challenge them. Children's attitudes were generally good and they were keen to do well.

### Quality of provision

In the lessons observed there was evidence that teaching is improving. There is an increasing focus on clearly planning what learning needs to take place and how that should be different for the range of children's abilities. Most of the teaching seen was satisfactory. More good teaching was seen compared to the last visit. Some aspects of inadequate teaching were observed.

Lesson plans continue to improve and teachers are becoming more articulate in writing learning objectives and how these will translate into activities. All lesson plans identify what is expected of children of different abilities but at times this information relates to the activity and not the learning. Lesson plans for English and mathematics are often very detailed and there is some good practice taking place.

In the best lessons teaching was lively and caught children's interest. Teachers clearly explained what children were expected to learn and pointed out what they needed to do to show they had achieved the learning objective. Children made progress because the work they were given was well matched to their ability. In some classes good practice is emerging where children check their own progress against success criteria.

In lessons where some children did not make enough progress, teaching failed to engage them in their work. Learning objectives were not used effectively because they were too broad and children did not understand how their work would help them to succeed. Teachers' expectations of how much children could do, and how quickly they should work, were not high enough and as a result the pace of the lesson was too slow and children's learning was interrupted by a lack of concentration and unsettled behaviour. In a small number of lessons teachers missed opportunities to increase the rate of progress children made. For example, in one lesson children were allowed to do work they were already able to do and in another the work was undemanding and just kept children occupied.

There is evidence in children's books that their work is becoming much more focused around a learning objective. Children often write the learning objective in their English and mathematics books. This practice has helped to improve marking which is now referring to how well children have achieved against the learning objective. Marking is not yet identifying what children could do next to improve and is an area for improvement identified by the school. Teachers are developing the use of English and mathematics targets and these are most effectively used when referred to in lessons.

Children's work highlights improvements in the rates of progress they make but also where their progress remains slow. In some books limited amounts of recorded work for a lesson, work that appears confused and work that does not build on what has been learnt before indicates less effective teaching. There is evidence that not all teaching is effectively making sure that children of different abilities are given work that is matched to their needs. This last judgement is supported by the school's own monitoring of books where the amount of progress of some lower ability children has been judged to be inadequate. The instances where children's work shows inadequate progress are now much more isolated, giving leadership a clear focus for where further improvement is needed.

Teaching assistants are effectively deployed. They often provide good support for children with learning difficulties or those with a statement of special educational needs.

At the time of the last visit work had only just started to use an electronic system to collate assessment data. The school now has a complete set of assessment results in English and mathematics which has been used effectively to identify children who were not making satisfactory progress. The children identified have been given additional teaching in small groups which has improved the amount of support and challenge they receive. This group work has now been taking place for a few weeks and there are plans to evaluate the impact this has had on children's progress.

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

- Improve the lesson planning, and the quality of teaching, so that the work children are given enables them to achieve more and reach the standards of which they are capable by the end of Year 6. – satisfactory
- Ensure assessment is accurate, and used more effectively to track children' progress and improve target setting for all groups. – satisfactory

### Leadership and management

Since the last visit there has been a significant improvement in the regularity of monitoring teaching and learning. The headteacher has been far more effective in this aspect of her role and has dedicated 30% of her time to undertake this work. She has given clear judgements and has been prepared to say where learning for groups of children has been inadequate.

Lesson observations, both planned and unannounced, have been more rigorous in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching. When planned observations have taken place teachers have been given an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning which informs the teacher and raises the awareness of how judgments are made. An overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning is not made following an unannounced observation which has not helped quantify the progress the school is making. Monitoring of teachers' planning has improved. Teachers now get comments about what to do to improve planning and the action they take is then monitored further. These comments show that teachers are taking note of what is being said and are developing their practice.

At the time of the last visit the senior leadership team had not made any checks on the work in children's books. In this area there has been a significant improvement. Children's books have been checked and very helpful comments and clear judgements have been made. Further checks are planned to evaluate the impact of this monitoring on teaching and the progress children make.

The Literacy and mathematics co-ordinators have been involved in monitoring teaching and learning working alongside either the headteacher or an advisor from the LA. This has increased the experience and skills of co-ordinators to make judgements about teaching and learning. The deputy headteacher has not had opportunities to observe teaching since July 2007. Neither has she closely monitored the teaching and learning of children with learning difficulties or those with a statement of special educational needs in her role as special educational needs co-ordinator. She has been involved in the improved and effective monitoring of children's work and teacher's planning. With limited opportunities to monitor teaching the impact of the deputy's role has not been fully utilised.

The chair of governors has observed teaching in the school and is gaining a more insightful view of the school's effectiveness. Information about the school is improving and governors are better informed to be able to challenge the school and hold it to account.

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

- Develop more rigorous monitoring and evaluation skills, at all levels of leadership, and use the information gained from this to bring about more rapid improvement to teaching and learning. – good

#### External support

Since the last visit LA support has been good. It has been much more focused on areas where the school needs guidance and advice. The support given to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning has been rigorous and has helped raise expectations and deliver tough messages. The LA has also provided training for Governors and supported well the schools improvements in ICT.

#### Priorities for further improvement

There are no additional priorities for further improvement identified.