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Mr Tony Cox
The Headteacher
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Dear Mr Cox

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SPRATTON CHURCH
OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit to your school on 12 and 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 March 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.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of education for the Diocese of Peterborough and the Director for Children and Young People for Northamptonshire.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF SPRATTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Evidence

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

Context

Since the last visit, staffing has stabilised and the school is now settled. The Year 5/6 teacher has been identified by the LA as a leading practitioner and is working as an advisory teacher supporting other schools on her non teaching days.

Achievement and standards

The standards seen in lessons are broadly in line with age related expectations and sometimes above the levels expected. Since the start of the academic year, pupils have made satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. Nonetheless, the legacy of uneven progress means that some of the older pupils still need to make bigger strides over the course of this year. With this in mind, the school is making very good use of assessment and target setting to steer and accelerate their improvement. The pupils' progress is carefully monitored through regular assessments of reading, writing, mathematics and science. Suitable steps have been taken to ensure that these are accurate and reliable, with regular whole school moderation of work. Teachers have a clearer understanding of the standards that pupils should reach and the rates of progress that they should make. Tracking is systematic and increasingly rigorous, and the analysis of assessment information is thorough and detailed. The school makes effective use of this analysis to identify pupils that might be falling behind. Intervention strategies are carefully planned, using a good balance of withdrawal and additional in class support and carefully targeted work.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in March 2007:

- ensure that systems for tracking pupils' progress are complete and supply information that is used to provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve progress – good.

Personal development and well-being

In general, the pupils are very well behaved and have positive attitudes to learning. Although not a significant area for improvement, the school has taken steps to strengthen the pupils' personal development. The headteacher has improved the climate around the school by sensibly taking a firm line on certain aspects of unacceptable behaviour and by successfully promoting a new system of rewards. This two pronged approach has emphasised to pupils their personal responsibilities

and the importance of showing consideration for others. The school's positive ethos has been strengthened.

The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Indeed, the pupils take great delight in some of the enterprising activities that are planned for them. During the visit the youngest children from the Reception and Year 1 class staged a fashion show and the Year 3/4 class prepared a Tudor banquet as part of their history topic. Both events demonstrated that good learning can be great fun, although the wealthy Tudors enjoyed preparing the food rather more than eating it!

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve, although there are not yet enough lessons that are consistently good or outstanding. The most significant improvements have been made in the quality of the teaching environment, the detail of lesson planning and the use of assessment and target setting.

The excellent outdoor area has been developed for the youngest children, and the classrooms are lively and engaging places to learn with displays of work that support the pupils' learning well. Lesson planning focuses more sharply on the 'success criteria' or outcomes that pupils with different abilities will achieve. This ensures that independent learning activities are more carefully planned and that higher attaining pupils, in particular, are suitably challenged. This challenge is also very well underpinned by the systematic use of targets in English and mathematics. The pupils understand what they need to do to improve in these subjects and are also given very clear guidance through marking. The pupils' individual targets in their exercise books also encourage pupils to evaluate their own progress.

The LA monitoring visit in November highlighted some weaknesses in teaching, particularly in the pace and focus of learning. Although staff have worked hard to address the issues raised, the pace of learning in some lessons is still rather pedestrian, particularly in whole class sessions when pupils are expected to sit and listen for extended periods of time. The way that the most effective teachers use skilful questioning and pair and group work to engage the pupils needs to be more widely replicated.

The school has sensibly revised the issue on science to give greater emphasis to the quality of learning, rather than simply planning better schemes of work.

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

- ensure that work given to middle ability and high ability pupils in English and mathematics is sufficiently challenging – satisfactory
- ensure that the curriculum provides coverage of science topics – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Leadership at all levels has strengthened. Procedures for monitoring the school's work and progress have been suitably developed and the roles of subject leaders in English, mathematics and science have been extended. Lesson observations and

scrutinies of teachers' planning and pupils' work have given subject leaders a clear overview of standards and provision in their respective areas. The development of their monitoring roles has made school self-evaluation more systematic and rigorous, so that the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement. The next step is to ensure that these evaluations impact fully on the quality of teaching and learning in all the classes.

Governance has strengthened. The governors are well informed about the school's work. They have always been very supportive of the school, but now balance well the need for both support and challenge.

The headteacher has kept an eye on the wider needs of the school's development by strengthening systems for care, guidance and support and improving the pupils' personal development. One example of this is the exciting plan to develop the school field as a rich learning resource and a stimulating place for children to play.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in March 2007:

- carry out more rigorous and detailed monitoring of teaching in order to identify exactly what teachers need to do to improve – satisfactory.

External support

Monitoring by the LA has been robust and its support has been good, particularly the advice and guidance provided by subject consultants. This has given subject leaders confidence in developing their roles and responsibilities and has galvanised the staff to continue the school's improvement.

Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by sharing the good and outstanding practice that exists within the school.