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24 January 2008

Mrs P Allsopp  
The Headteacher  
Braunstone Frith Infant School  
Liberty Road  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE3 6NN

Dear Mrs Allsopp

### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BRAUNSTONE FRITH INFANT SCHOOL

Following my visit with Krishan Sharma, Additional Inspector, to your school on 15 and 16 January 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2006. 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.

Newly qualified teachers (NQT) may be appointed subject to the following conditions. The school must involve the local authority (LA) in the appointment process. The NQT should be mentored in school by a teacher of proven high quality. All NQT entitlements must be met in full. Appropriate internal and external development, support and induction must be provided.

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BRAUNSTONE FRITH INFANT SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 15 and 16 January 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher and senior leadership team (SLT), the chair of governors and other governing body members including the school improvement group (SIG), the standards inspector and the associate headteacher. Informal discussions were also held with other staff and pupils.

### Context

There have been a number of staffing changes since the last inspection. Two teachers are on maternity leave and, despite its best efforts, the governing body was unable to make suitable appointments to cover their absence following advertisement and interview. To overcome this, two temporary supply agency staff have been recruited to teach in school until the end of this academic year. Resignation, maternity leave and long term sickness have also necessitated changes in the complement and organisation of teaching assistants. An office manager and an attendance clerk have been appointed and are working in school. There is one governor vacancy following the resignation of a parent governor. A winter sickness bug led to increased absence of both staff and children towards the end of last term. Building work is ongoing. Two classes have moved into the new building, allowing most other class groups to return into the main building from temporary mobile classrooms. Two Year 2 classes and the nurture group remain located outside the main building.

### Achievement and standards

The school has built up assessment data which is providing reliable information about how much progress pupils are making. Although standards generally remain below average, improving rates of progress are helping pupils to move towards achieving the standards expected for their age. Information from pupil progress meetings shows improvement in reading, writing and mathematics, with an increased percentage of higher attaining pupils. This has led to an upward revision of the end of Year 2 targets for 2008. Provisional 2009 targets also project further improvement in all areas which will continue to narrow the gap with national outcomes. In all year groups, teachers are aware of which pupils are underperforming and this is helping to inform their planning and preparation.

In lessons observed during this visit, the whole school focus on calculation in mathematics and letters and sounds in literacy is paying dividends and is beginning to help to raise standards in these areas. However, weaknesses in pupils' understanding and knowledge of place value are preventing them from making secure progress in this aspect of mathematics. Despite increasing opportunities to

practise and consolidate their writing skills, particularly in other subjects, writing continues to require improvement. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows signs of improvement in writing fluency and accuracy, along with confidence in spelling. Although handwriting is developing, it continues to be hampered by poor pencil grip and incorrect letter formation by many pupils. Higher attaining pupils are being provided with some additional challenge, but opportunities are not always taken to push them even further. Some activities do not allow them to develop their own ideas or work independently.

A range of systems for assessing pupils' work has been successfully implemented throughout the school. Learning objectives are shared routinely and pupils are encouraged to judge the success of their own work during and at the end of some lessons. Most teachers engage pupils through a range of questioning techniques which are used effectively to encourage them to explain and discuss their ideas. Target boards are displayed in all classes and working walls have been established, although as in the last visit, little or no reference was made to them in lessons. The proposal to develop a portfolio of pupils' assessed work is appropriate. This will increase further teacher confidence to make increasingly accurate and secure judgements of pupils' progress.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- make better use of assessment information to challenge the more able and ensure that pupils in Year 1 have suitable opportunities to practise and consolidate their learning, particularly in writing and mathematics – satisfactory.

### Personal development and well-being

The school has continued with its efforts to improve the level of pupils' attendance and punctuality. The most recent attendance data show some modest increase in both, but they remain well short of where the school needs to, or would like, to be. Good attendance is routinely rewarded but it has not received a high enough profile as a whole school focus. The recent appointment of an attendance officer is a good move towards improving attendance, but to achieve better results the school needs to undertake a robust analysis of its data to identify any patterns of absence and lateness. The school has taken active steps to stress the need for regular attendance during home visits by Foundation Stage staff. Indeed, working with parents is beginning to pay off, particularly in the Foundation Stage. This success points to the need to foster further links with parents and the community, including those represented on the governing body. Pupils behave well in lessons and in and around the school. They cooperate with each other well and enjoy good relationships with adults. The personal and social skills of pupils being supported in the nurture group are steadily improving.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- work more closely with parents and carers to promote good attendance – satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

During this visit the quality of teaching and learning was not as good as in the previous visit. There were fewer good lessons and a small number were inadequate. Planning remains a strength as it gives a clear focus in most lessons. Most teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn. Higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively in the good lessons through demanding tasks and precise oral feedback. Where teaching is less effective, lessons move too slowly and the tasks given often lack focus and do not match the precise requirements of the learning objectives. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of, particularly the more able ones. Guidance given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is becoming stronger because it is more accurately matched to their needs. Marking accurately comments on pupils' learning against the set learning objectives, but the suitable guidance given for future improvement is rarely followed up. This means the improvement points given to pupils do not fully play their part in increasing their progress and in raising standards.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- ensure that all pupils have clear guidance about what they need to do to improve and get better – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

School leaders are increasing their capacity to improve. There has been a thorough review of the raising attainment plan (RAP), with the resultant construction of a revised RAP coupled with the revision and updating of the self-evaluation form (SEF). The school has a clear direction with plans that detail the step by step actions that need to take place to make the improvements needed. Key policies, such as those for assessment, recording and reporting and monitoring and evaluation, have been developed during the term. These are awaiting ratification by governors before implementation. The school continues to receive intensive support from the associate headteacher assigned to the school. She has been a good role model and provided high quality mentorship and support. Although her time has reduced recently, the sustained high level of support is preventing school leaders from demonstrating sufficiently their capacity to work independently or their ability to sustain initiatives that have been introduced. The School Improvement Partner (SIP) has satisfactorily commenced her work with the school.

The school has a number of good subject leaders. The leaders of both literacy and numeracy are currently on maternity leave. However, very effective transition arrangements were made prior to them leaving and these have enabled the work in both subjects to continue seamlessly and without loss of momentum. Subject leaders speak confidently about standards and they have a clear, strategic view of how to improve them. This work has been effectively supported by LA consultants who have provided clear direction and guidance. The coordination of assessment and special educational needs is of high quality. The school is now making regular checks on lessons, teachers' plans and pupils' work, although some are not rigorous enough

and do not sufficiently hold staff to account. Pupil progress meetings identify those pupils who are not making satisfactory progress and detail appropriate actions to rectify this. However, the impact of these actions is not always followed up as a matter of routine at subsequent meetings. Some lesson observations have been too brief to capture the full impact of teaching on pupils' learning. In addition, overall judgements are not always shared explicitly with teachers. As a result, some are not always clear about the level they are working at and how they can improve their practice from satisfactory to good. Staff have worked hard to make the necessary improvements. Their morale remains high and all are committed to improving pupils' progress. A number of new staff has recently been appointed to the school. Although there is an induction policy, this has not been consistently applied. In addition, it needs revising to include guidance and support for the office manager.

Since the last visit, the involvement of the governing body has improved. The appointment of new governors has injected much needed expertise and support. Recent training has helped governors increase their understanding of roles and responsibilities and monitoring and evaluation. The SIG has developed well. Members of this group are now more confident and are increasing their challenge of the headteacher and SLT. A number of other governors are beginning to increase their involvement and understanding of the work of the school. However, this is not yet consistent and governors know there is yet more work to do in order for them to increase their effectiveness. They understand that as the school reduces its reliance on external support, they need to counterbalance this by increasing the part they play by acting as critical friends to the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- improve the way pupils' progress is tracked to provide a better understanding of how well they are doing and ensure that whole school strategies are implemented fully and evaluated carefully to check for their effectiveness – satisfactory.

### External support

The school has continued to benefit from effective targeted support from the LA. Consultants continue to provide appropriate guidance and support to staff. This has continued to develop the skills of subject leaders as well as providing targeted support for individual teachers. The governor support and training manager has successfully delivered training for governors to help increase their understanding of their roles and functions. The standards inspector has reduced her direct input with the school but has continued to maintain an oversight of developments by attending appropriate management meetings.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the proportion of good teaching to further improve the rate of pupils' progress.
- Continue to improve pupils' attendance by analysing data and taking appropriate steps to address the outcomes.

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation are precise, giving clear indication of the next steps for improvement, and that resultant actions are appropriately checked for their impact.
- Reduce the amount of external support to allow the school's leaders to demonstrate that they have secure capacity to improve, by driving forward their own developments.