

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



7 March 2008

Mr P Wood
The Headteacher
Knighton Fields Primary School and Community Centre
Knighton Fields Road West
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE2 7NP

Dear Mr Wood

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KNIGHTON FIELDS
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 February 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 KNIGHTON FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 27 and 28 February 2008

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher and senior leadership team (SLT), the chair of governors and a representative from the LA.

Context

Since the last visit in October 2007, one teacher has resigned and the class is being taught by a long term supply teacher. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed, in collaboration with the LA, to teach in Key Stage 2. A teacher remains on long term absence. The key subject areas of mathematics, science and assessment are being fulfilled on a temporary basis until suitable permanent appointments can be made. The governing body has three vacancies. The school has successfully consulted with parents about extending the school day and the revised arrangements are due to start in September 2008. The number of pupils on roll has remained stable at 203. The proportion of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English has increased to 16%, with 17% of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times.

Achievement and standards

When they start in the Nursery, many children have skills in all areas that are well below expectations for their age. Most children settle well and they get off to a secure start with their learning. Progress accelerates as a result of good teaching so that by the end of the Foundation Stage many are working within the goals set for children of this age in most areas of learning. Participation in the LA's communication, language and literacy development pilot project is proving beneficial. These children are showing good attitudes and making good progress in their speaking and listening skills and learning sounds and letters. The school knows it needs to build on these skills if reading and writing standards are to improve. Standards are still below average by the time the children join Year 1.

Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is variable, but internal school data and inspection evidence show that it is gradually getting better. Where the teaching is good, this is reflected in the progress pupils make. Standards are improving, but they are still too low in English, mathematics and science, and insufficient numbers achieve the higher levels of attainment. This is because more able pupils have a great deal of ground to make up after several years of underachievement. In addition, teachers do not always plan work that sufficiently challenges these pupils. Analysis of attainment data and classroom monitoring has identified gaps in the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. In writing, although pupils' use of vocabulary is improving, too many pupils continue to make careless mistakes with their sentence construction,

punctuation and spelling. Handwriting and presentation are developing, but continue to be hampered by poor pencil grip and incorrect letter formation by many pupils. In mathematics, although pupils are covering a wider range of work, their calculation skills remain weak. In science, recent assessments show gaps in pupils' knowledge because teachers have not always successfully built on previous learning. The school is addressing underachievement more rigorously by tracking pupil progress more carefully. All teachers are aware of which pupils are underperforming and this is helping to inform their planning and preparation. Extra support and booster lessons are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, strategies such as Better Reading and Reading Recovery are implemented effectively and these are accelerating rates of pupil progress.

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

- raise standards achieved by pupils and set work that is pitched at the right level and provide guidance that will help improve their work – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils continue to have positive attitudes. They say they like their lessons and enjoy learning. Pupils' interest and concentration in lessons have improved as a result. The school's continued efforts have brought about further improvement in attendance which, at 94.6% for this term so far, is around the national figure for last year. The school continues to place great emphasis on good punctuality through the Cool Cat scheme and far fewer pupils than before are late in the morning. A very good system of monitoring and reward is well understood by parents and pupils and is effective in encouraging regular attendance. The headteacher, governors and education welfare officer continue to work with a small group of parents to improve individual pupils' attendance. Governors have taken a strong line concerning unauthorised absence by issuing fixed penalty notices where permission has not been granted.

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

- improve the pupils' attendance – good.

Quality of provision

Teachers now have clearer expectations about what they want pupils to learn and share this with them at the start of lessons. They are getting better at planning work at different levels. In the best lessons, different groups are aware of what they need to do to succeed and work provides the right level of challenge for them. Pupils are motivated to improve their work and they make good progress. There are still times where work is not matched well enough to pupils' capabilities, particularly the most able. Pupils are not fully engaged and, as a result, their slow pace of learning prevents them from reaching their potential. Whilst a number of good lessons are now evident, there is still not enough consistently good teaching to ensure that standards are improving swiftly in every class. The quality of marking has improved well since the last monitoring visit. Teachers offer more useful comments to help

pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' work is celebrated well through high quality displays in corridors and classrooms.

The school has worked hard to develop further its systems for keeping track of pupils' progress. Regular progress meetings are now established and are a valuable tool for enabling each teacher to be accountable for standards in their class. These meetings show inconsistent rates of progress across the school. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities continues to be well directed. All groups of vulnerable pupils, including those with behavioural problems and those at an early stage of learning English, are quickly identified, well supported and their progress carefully monitored. This enables them to achieve as well as others. In some instances, learning support assistants substantially enhance the progress of pupils through intensive group work.

Since the last monitoring visit, teachers have undertaken further child protection training and governors have checked regularly on health and safety issues. Newly appointed staff have been inducted appropriately. The educational visit coordinator is helping to identify and minimise risks for those staff organising school trips and visits. Procedures for safeguarding children meet government requirements.

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

- ensure that procedures for making the school a safe and healthy place are implemented rigorously – satisfactory.

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

- implement a curriculum that caters for the needs of all pupils, including those at the early stages of learning English – progress on this issue was not assessed during this inspection.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, supported by his senior leadership team, is providing strong leadership and direction to the work of the school. Together, they have a clear and shared understanding of what needs to be done to help the school to improve. They work well as a team and complement each other's skills extremely well. They have a good and accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have worked hard and have driven forward some important developments. There is a rigorous approach to checking classroom practice, which has also involved staff from the LA. This approach has ensured that, whilst strengths are being identified and shared internally, weaknesses are being tackled much more systematically. Staff have been made more accountable and they have risen well to this challenge. They work hard and their determination to succeed remains.

The work of middle managers has been less effective because of the frequent changes due to long term absence and resignations. This has placed a huge burden on the senior leaders to sustain improvements pending permanent appointments. There is some light at the end of the tunnel. Governors have recently appointed an

experienced teacher to co-ordinate mathematics, securing early release from their current post. This person will start work at the beginning of the summer term 2008. The governing body has continued to develop its roles and responsibilities well since the last monitoring inspection. Although they do not have the required complement, governors are becoming more knowledgeable about strengths and weaknesses in the school through presentations by staff and through in depth debate, particularly in committees. There is a noticeable improvement to the level of challenge presented to the school, particularly to the headteacher. Governors are also gaining a first hand and more independent view of provision within the school. The refurbishment of the Key Stage 2 corridor has created a more spacious, bright and attractive learning environment.

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

- carry out rigorous monitoring of the school's performance to identify exactly where weaknesses are and take swift action to bring about improvement – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support to the school. Its advisory staff visit regularly and they have helped to improve provision, especially in the quality of teaching and learning. The school improvement adviser provides a realistic appraisal of progress since the school went into special measures. The School Improvement Partner has good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and what it needs to do to improve.

Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the proportion of good teaching to improve further the rates of pupils' progress.
- Increase the challenge for the more able pupils by ensuring activities are more accurately matched to their needs.
- Endeavour to appoint a teacher of high quality with responsibility for English.