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Miss Machaela Wright  
Headteacher  
Berkeley Junior School  
Marsden Drive  
Scunthorpe  
DN15 8AH

Dear Miss Wright

Ofsted monitoring of Notice to Improve schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 June 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my particular thanks to the pupils who were polite and responsive. I also appreciate the time given by the chair of governors and the schools' school improvement partner.

As a result of the inspection in November 2007, the school was asked to:

- Raise pupils' standards, maintaining the focus on English, mathematics and science
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupil's achievement.

The headteacher is very visible around the school. Together with the deputy headteacher they provide a strong direction for the school and have helped to raise staff morale. They are determined to raise standards. Senior leaders have tackled the key areas identified in the previous inspection promptly and effectively. Robust and systematic procedures have been put in place for tracking the progress made by pupils and to identify any who may underachieve, particularly in English, mathematics and science.

As a result, the school's data indicate that the results of national tests and assessments will improve this year. The legacy of underachievement is being eradicated and although progress is not yet consistent within all classes or across the school, inspection evidence indicates that standards are rising and pupils'

achievement is improving. Standards this year are expected to be close to the national averages at both Level 4 for English, mathematics and science and at Level 5 for English and mathematics. Progress has been more rapid in English which, rightly, was initially prioritised for improvement across the school.

School self-evaluation is accurate. Data collected from monitoring activities is evaluated rigorously and the areas requiring further improvement are clearly identified. The school has, rightly, chosen to implement long term strategies to ensure that the improvements made are sustained over time. Following a drive to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, the school now recognises that more work needs to be done to improve provision and raise standards in science.

The school has increased the regularity and rigour of activities designed to check the progress made by individual pupils. The school tracking system is updated regularly, with the results of standardised tests and teacher assessments shared with all staff. Pupils learn best when teachers use the information gained from the tracking data and day-to-day assessments effectively to ensure that the work pupils are given meets their particular needs well. Where the use of assessment is less developed, some pupils do not progress as well as they might because the work they are given does not challenge them appropriately or is too difficult for them. Books are marked regularly but there are variations in the quality of marking. Where it is most helpful it not only tells pupils how to improve their work but also identifies where a particular piece of work exemplifies a particular level. Pupils now know their curriculum targets for reading, writing and mathematics. These are recorded in their books and generally ensure that individual pupils know exactly the level they are aiming for and how to get there. Occasionally targets have not been updated or relate to a group of pupils rather than individuals.

Classrooms are attractive and good use is made of pupils' work to provide a stimulating and interesting environment. Display enables information to be shown and also for pupils' work to be celebrated.

The drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning is shared by all staff and they work hard to make lessons interesting for pupils. More regular monitoring and evaluating of teaching is undertaken and there has been a significant increase in the proportion of teaching and learning graded good by the school since the previous inspection. This monitoring is enabling senior managers to have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. They are also able to provide, along with consultants from the local authority, precise support and guidance, as required, to individual teachers. An increasing number of staff are confident to undertake lesson observations and they have benefited from effective training from the school improvement partner. Not all teachers are developing new skills at the same rate but all are improving as the result of helpful training, support and mentoring.

Governance is improving. Externally provided training has been positively received. This, together with additional meetings and the information provided by the school, has improved governors' confidence and their understanding of the needs of the

school. Governors are now able to ask challenging questions; they recognize how well the school is performing and are capable of holding senior managers to account more effectively.

Overall, the level of teamwork is high. Staff and governors know that the school is improving and are keen to sustain this improvement. They are determined not to let performance regress. The school is well supported and monitored by the school improvement partner together with a range of subject consultants from the local authority.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young HMI  
Her Majesty's Inspector