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20 March 2008

Ms S Machin  
The Headteacher  
King Charles Primary School  
Wilkes Avenue  
Bentley  
Walsall  
West Midlands  
WS2 0JN

Dear Ms Machin

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KING CHARLES  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit to your school on 17 March 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 2006. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to confirmation with HMI.

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 Education Walsall.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright  
H M Inspector

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection: 17 March 2008

### Evidence

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, met with the headteacher, Education Walsall officers and teaching staff.

### Context

Further physical improvements to the site are evident, including new fencing, a parents' meeting room, and better access. All teaching posts are filled with permanent staff.

### Achievement and standards

Meticulous monitoring and assessment of every pupil show that almost all children are making at least the expected progress. Standards are still lower than average. Reading is stronger than writing, although there is clear evidence of accelerating progress in writing this term in Year 6. Pupils are making progress in most years in mathematics, although Year 4 remains an exception, and the reasons for this are unclear. The school has determined some underlying causes for relatively weak progress in mathematics, and is working with all Key Stage 2 classes to improve pupils' problem solving strategies. Consistent and regular practice of 'tables' is paying dividends in the improving mental arithmetic skills of pupils. Pupils are still too prone to rush at a problem, without stopping to systematically set out the separate steps needed. Achievement is satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

The teaching seen at this visit was good overall, with secure evidence of excellent planning and differentiation in Year 6 and Year 1/2 classes. In both of these lessons, class discussion was kept to a minimum, before teachers assigned different tasks to different groups of pupils depending on their prior knowledge and understanding. Pupils continue to work best in small groups, with tasks matched to their ability, and are well supported by classroom assistants. The quality of marking was good in all the work sampled. In English and mathematics books, pupils routinely respond to advice and instruction by writing their corrections or by doing a further task. This is less well established in other subjects, and there are still a few instances where teachers have not checked if pupils actually did as advised.

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

- raise standards and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by using time more effectively, raising teachers' expectations and ensuring that guidance for pupils, including marking, is more precise – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

Both issues raised in my previous monitoring visit are being rigorously addressed, namely ICT provision and barriers to progress in mathematics learning.

Subject coordinators are now leading planning surgeries, observing lessons, and conducting work scrutiny. In addition, they have systematically tried to find reasons for weaker progress in mathematics. This has involved discussions with pupils and staff, and resulted in the roll out of RUCSAC, a scheme to help pupils read the problem carefully, underline the various pieces of information, calculate each step, set out their working, state the answer clearly and check their results. This is good evidence of the school responding to the good information from progress tracking in a professional, evidenced based approach to improving outcomes.

The school is now operating its own monitoring and evaluation of classroom provision, with support from Education Walsall appropriately shifting from direct coaching to more 'arms length' oversight.

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

- with the full involvement of senior managers and coordinators, implement rigorous monitoring and evaluation that focuses clearly on pupils' learning in lessons and their progress over time – good.

## External support

The monitoring of overall school performance by Education Walsall officers continues to be accurate, and their oversight and support for the school remains a key strand in the school's recovery. The federation arrangements continue to ensure easy access to expertise, for both partner schools, and a sense of wider community teamwork. Education Walsall has conducted a thorough audit of ICT facilities and set out a clear step by step pathway to improve provision and networking between the two federated schools.