

18 July 2008

Mrs Barke  
The Headteacher  
St James CEVA Primary School  
Harleston Road  
Northampton  
Northamptonshire  
NN5 7AG

Dear Mrs Barke

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ST JAMES CEVA  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Krishan Sharma, Additional Inspector, to your school on 9 and 10 July 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 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.

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 the Children and Young People's Service for Northamptonshire and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Northamptonshire.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF ST JAMES CEVA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection: 9 and 10 July 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with groups of pupils, the headteacher, nominated staff, the chair of governors, and representatives from the local authority (LA).

### Context

The school continues to experience high pupil mobility. The school has received an additional 70 pupils this year of which approximately half speak English as an additional language, whilst 39 have left. Three teachers are leaving the school this term. They are expected to be replaced in September by a new deputy headteacher, a Key Stage 1 coordinator and three class teachers.

### Achievement and standards

The school's assessment information shows that most children entered the Reception classes this year with skills that were well below expectations in communication, language and literacy and mathematical calculation. The majority have skills that are below expectations in the other aspects of the curriculum. Most children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is generally in line with expectations. In communication, language and literacy good progress means that children have narrowed the gap between their current skill levels and what they are expected to achieve for their age.

Since the last monitoring inspection, progress has accelerated in the Year 1 classes because of improvements in teaching and learning. In one lesson most pupils demonstrated that they were able to blend sounds to make words because of improvements in phonics teaching. In Year 2, assessment results for 2008 show that overall standards remain below average. Pupils have made satisfactory progress in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving average standards in mathematics has risen considerably this year. Good progress has been made in writing and standards have risen. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing, mathematics and reading has risen. These improvements are beginning to narrow the gap between school standards and the national average.

In Key Stage 2, satisfactory progress is now generally being made in all years with good progress in Year 6 in English and mathematics. In writing, progress has been good so that the gap is narrowing between school standards and national expectations. Progress in reading and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5 has been satisfactory because of a general improvement in teaching, but this progress is insufficient to raise standards which remain below national expectations. Standards in Year 6 overall remain below average. Standards have risen in writing so that there are a much greater proportion of pupils well placed to achieve average results in the

2008 national tests. Weaknesses in the provision for science mean that the progress of pupils remains too slow.

Teachers are making much better use of assessment information to check progress. Regular meetings ensure that this information is adequately analysed so that provision can be directed to pupils who need additional support. Improvements have been made to the use teachers make of assessment information so that it more closely matches the needs of pupils. As a result, the more able pupils are making faster progress than at the time of the last visit. Insufficient use is made of this information to ensure that all groups are making the progress that they could. For example, the school does not analyse the progress of different ethnic groups amongst the pupils with English as an additional language.

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

- raise standards and improve achievement by establishing clear assessment procedures so that teachers know how well pupils are doing and can plan work matched to their needs – satisfactory.

### Personal development and well-being

Most pupils enjoy being at school. As a result, they behave well in their lessons and relate well to their peers. The specialist support staff continue to enjoy pupils' confidence because they help them to improve their work and attend to their personal needs. Pupils take the job of settling down the new arrivals to the school seriously and accept that they have a contribution to make. Bullying is rare, and when it happens, it is dealt with promptly. Attendance is still below average and remains a concern for the school. The school has worked closely with parents and local agencies to ensure that attendance is rising gradually. However, not enough is known about the specific reasons for the weak attendance of some groups of pupils. This means that procedures for improving attendance are not sufficiently focused on the groups of pupils where attendance is weakest.

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

- work with families of pupils who are frequently absent to improve attendance – satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve and is now generally satisfactory across the school. Teachers are now demonstrating that in English and mathematics lessons they are more able to plan work that is pitched at the correct level for most groups of pupils. As a result, the rate of progress pupils make is faster. Teaching is stronger in English and mathematics than in many of the other subjects. In all lessons, teachers and the support staff establish good relationships, which contribute to overall good behaviour. The planning for the curriculum now ensures that all National Curriculum subjects are taught and that it has been updated to take into account the new frameworks for literacy and numeracy. Insufficient attention has

been paid to improving the provision for science because the school has prioritised English and mathematics. In general, planning ensures adequate coverage of scientific knowledge, but the planning for scientific enquiry does not have sufficient clarity to secure continuity and progression of key skills. In some lessons, the linking of different subjects into themes is beginning to make more sense to pupils as well as adding to their enjoyment. For example, the study of the Second World War in Years 5 and 6 enabled pupils to talk expertly about the impact of rationing because they had applied their mathematical skills to gain an understanding of how much food people were allowed every week.

Good pastoral care is now well established and appreciated by pupils. Academic care continues to improve. Pupils are increasingly aware of their targets for learning and why they have them. Occasionally, pupils think they are too easy and feel they could be given more challenging work. Marking and the presentation of pupils' written work continue to improve as a result of the recent emphasis on consistency across the school. The pastoral care of pupils with English as an additional language continues to be good. However, the school recognises that some pupils have difficulty accessing parts of the curriculum and gaining the academic support they require to make good progress.

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

- plan the curriculum so that pupils experience a variety of subjects, study relevant and interesting topics and have opportunities to develop their basic skills – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

The headteacher and governors have worked hard to strengthen the teaching team for next year which is now well placed to make further sustained improvements in provision. The headteacher arranged teachers into teams to improve teaching and learning this year. This has not yet had sufficient impact on teaching and learning because the expectations of the outcomes of teamwork have not been made explicit to teachers. Where teams work successfully sharing their expertise, pupils benefit from well planned lessons that ensure they all make good progress, for example in the Reception classes. In other teams, a lack of effective team work means that expertise is not shared sufficiently and pupils experience lessons that are too varied in quality so that some are only satisfactory whilst others are very good.

Monitoring and evaluation procedures are now embedded adequately into the school routine. Subject leaders for mathematics and English continue to improve their skills of monitoring and evaluating provision and clearly understand what improvements need to be made so that standards rise. This has been particularly successful in writing where standards have risen across the school. However, whilst leaders carry out their work conscientiously they are not sufficiently held to account for the impact of their actions on improved provision and pupil progress. As a result, some recommended improvements to teaching have not been applied as consistently as they could.

Governance continues to strengthen. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities mean that strong relationships are being established between individual governors and school leaders. Consequently, as well as supporting the work of the school, governors are well placed to hold leaders to account in their role as a critical friend.

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

- involve subject leaders in taking active roles to improve teaching and the curriculum – satisfactory.

### External support

The school benefits from a high standard of support from consultants in English and mathematics. The regular checks that are made about progress give the school some useful advice. The support they receive for pupils with English as an additional language is inadequate. It is not tailored to meet the needs of the school or its pupils. The support the school receives for attendance is insufficient to eradicate this weakness.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Identify specifically the groups of pupils whose attendance is weakest, and the reasons for this, in order to implement new procedures to ensure their attendance improves.
- Improve the provision for science so that progress accelerates.
- Strengthen team work so that the quality of teaching and learning becomes more consistent.
- Ensure that school leaders are held accountable for their work so that they can have a greater impact on school improvement.