

17 June 2008

Headteacher  
Netherfield Primary School  
Chandos Street  
Netherfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG4 2LR

Dear Mr Fitzpatrick

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF NETHERFIELD  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Gillian Smith and Roger Fry, Additional Inspectors, to your school on June 11 and 12, 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 January 2007. 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 – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to the following qualifications. A maximum of one member of staff should be newly qualified, and the school should make every effort to recruit a more experienced teacher if at all possible.

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 Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

David Martin  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF NETHERFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection: 11-12 June 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, two governors, a representative from the local authority (LA), and a partner headteacher.

### Context

The school has had to manage some staffing difficulties including maternity cover and absence through illness. The acting deputy headteacher is leaving to take up a new post but is being replaced in September by a substantive permanent deputy headteacher.

### Achievement and standards

Accurate and timely assessment of children entering the Nursery class confirms that their skills fall consistently below, and sometimes well below, the standards expected for 3 year olds nationally. Relative strengths on entry are children's personal, social and emotional development and physical development and a key weakness is their mathematical development. However, a rich and varied curriculum and good teaching help children to make good progress during their Nursery and Reception years and they enter Year 1 with skills that approach the national average. They make particularly strong progress with their physical development, early reading and mathematical skills and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Within the rest of the school, the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) is now a familiar part of school life and teachers are confident in its use. The school closely tracks the progress made by individual pupils and provides additional support for those who are underachieving. Analyses provided by the school show that pupils' progress has accelerated over the last six months. It is now satisfactory overall and often good in Years 1 to 4. The work in pupils' books endorses this and progress seen during lessons observed was good or better in almost half the lessons seen.

The most recent teacher assessments show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain very low at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. In less effective lessons, this is because the pace of learning is too slow and some pupils, especially the more able, are not challenged sufficiently. While recent assessments indicate that standards in Year 5 are higher than they were for the previous cohort, they also show that the standard of girls' reading and writing is over one year ahead of boys'.

The system for tracking pupils' work in science was introduced at the start of the current school year and it is still too new to provide meaningful information about the standard of pupils' work and their progress. However, an increased emphasis on scientific investigation is leading to pupils' greater enjoyment of the subject.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- Raise achievement in English, mathematics and science by using assessment information to ensure that learning builds on previous knowledge and skills – *satisfactory*.

## Personal development and well-being

These outcomes were not explored in detail at this visit, although the area remains a relative strength of the school. Students show a good level of care and support for each other and are aware of right and wrong. The developing curriculum is giving pupils more opportunities to reflect on important social, moral and cultural issues, and they respond eagerly and sensitively.

## Quality of provision

There has been further improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last monitoring visit. Teachers plan together more effectively, and staff expertise is frequently shared. The 'core' subject leaders for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) have helped to improve the teaching. This has resulted in clearer lesson targets that help teachers to measure pupils' learning more precisely. Most importantly, pupils are typically meeting the 'must', 'should' and 'could' targets they have, which form a very important part of the 'Intensifying Support Programme' approach to organising learning. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is more evaluative and is most comprehensive in English. There is scope to develop the quality of comments given to pupils about how they can improve their work in other subjects.

Staff confidence continues to improve, and there are now no major weaknesses in staff expertise in specific subjects. Staff training and support programmes have been effective in improving the overall knowledge that teachers have in science and ICT. In many lessons, teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards as a medium for teaching, combining more of the facilities they offer to make teaching interesting.

Teachers regularly check on pupils' learning and use assessments from previous lessons to guide their planning. Teachers are conscious that lessons should be taught at a good pace to maintain pupils' interest. In the more effective lessons there was no time for pupils to lose concentration. In the less successful lessons, there were moments when pupils, particularly boys, did not have enough to do or they wasted time on off-task activity.

Classrooms are orderly places, where pupils make at least satisfactory progress in each lesson. No inadequate lessons were observed. The school welcomes pupils with disabilities, and they make similar progress as their peers within a whole class environment. Core subject leaders with their colleagues are making a positive contribution to the improvement in the challenge for more able pupils. Teachers acknowledge there is still work to do to stretch this group fully, so that they achieve all they could.

Work to improve the curriculum is proceeding well. Pupils across the school experience a wide range of interesting activities, such as visits to Perlethorpe to study aspects of the environment. Links between subjects are strengthening. The 'Creative Learning Journey' approach continues to successfully interest pupils in what they are doing and enables them often to make good progress in lessons. The leader for this initiative is well aware that a comprehensive system for recording pupils' progress through the key skills is needed and that the implementation needs to continue to be staged to make such a large task practical. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 has improved considerably over the last year. The range and depth of activities are good.

The quality of care and support continues to be very good. The school has recently gained the Gold Healthy Schools Award. The school has a particularly broad curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including work about social and emotional aspects of pupils' lives. Pupils have been particularly active in fund raising.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning by: providing more challenge, improving teachers' knowledge of science, and by enabling pupils to reach their short-term targets – good
- provide a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and interests, particularly in Key Stage 1 - good

## Leadership and management

The headteacher has revised the school mission statement and school improvement plan. There has been some consultation with staff, governors and pupils, although this was not extensive. The plan outlines the main activities for development, linked to a monitoring and evaluation plan. This mainly provides clear short and medium objectives although longer term objectives are less well defined. Many of the stated activities are insufficiently sharp in focus, but appear to be well understood by managers at the school to form the basis of successful improvement activity. The outline plans are underpinned by more detailed planning specific to key objectives or teams, although not all objectives are covered in detail. These plans show lines of accountability and clear timescale and costings. However, it is not always clear what methods will be used to monitor and evaluate the success of the activities. A recent management review confirmed many of the findings of inspectors. It particularly stressed the need for the plan to have a coherent, limited number of key priorities that integrates the many current planned activities.

School self-evaluation is now more thorough due to the regular termly pattern of monitoring activities. This provides a good level of information for managers about progress and further areas for action. Senior and middle managers are engaged in a well-established pattern of classroom observation and work scrutiny, focussed much more clearly on pupil progress. This has resulted in changes in practice and adjustments to subject leaders' plans. The school self-evaluation form (SEF) has

been re-written and is now more evaluative than the previous version, reflecting this increased level and accuracy of monitoring activity.

Roles and responsibilities of senior leaders have been clarified, although further changes are to take place in September when a new deputy headteacher will take up post with a suitable induction plan. A recent staff questionnaire praised certain aspects of support and care from senior leaders, but was less positive about their coaching role. It is clear, however, that both senior and middle leaders see the development of teaching and learning as a priority. Several subject leaders have worked alongside other staff to help them develop their subject skills. Core subject leaders are managed effectively by senior leaders and are part of an extended weekly senior team meeting. This is having a substantial impact on their personal leadership skills and in developing leadership capacity in the school.

Pupils' progress is now more rigorously monitored. The responsibility for interpreting data and assessment information has been successfully devolved to core subject leaders, who now have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in pupil performance. They are increasingly involved in developing strategies to improve provision and organisation. In turn, classroom teachers are much more confident in using data to organise groups and plan work that is targeted at pupil needs and abilities.

The school has recruited new governors and is training them in monitoring skills. Governors now receive regular progress reports as a result of monitoring activity. They feel increasingly confident in their ability to hold the school to account.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- Strengthen leadership and management by more effective delegation of responsibilities and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and pupils' progress - good

## External support

The external support to the school continues to be broad and has been delivered in line with the LA action plan. It has also responded well to issues raised at previous visits. This has been particularly evident in terms of support for strategic planning. A partner headteacher has worked alongside the headteacher as part of the NCSL 'national support school' initiative. This work has contributed strongly to the revision of school vision and mission statements, a re-written SEF and a much improved school improvement plan. A management review, commissioned by the LA, has recognised improvements in strategic planning but also pointed the way forward in terms of sharpening actions, objectives and monitoring and evaluation methods.

The school improvement adviser has offered good support in terms of support to the headteacher and to middle managers in developing their effectiveness. The school improvement partner has also offered challenge. However, the LA recognises that there have been times when there has been too much or conflicting advice. The LA is, however, aware that the headteacher is now developing the confidence to evaluate the advice given and make his own judgements about the best ways to continue to move the school forward.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, particularly focussing on maintaining boys' concentration.
- Ensure that pupils receive advice in their marked work that shows them how to improve.
- Begin to develop a comprehensive tracking process for the development of pupils' key skills.