

05 June 2008

Mrs Coy
Springfield Junior School
Springfield Road
Swadlincote
Derbyshire
DE11 0BU

Dear Mrs Coy

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SPRINGFIELD
JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Rosemary Eaton, Additional Inspector, to your school on 21-22 May 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 May 2007. 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 may be appointed

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Strategic Director for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely



H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF SPRINGFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 21-22 May 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of children, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the last visit there has been one change in the teaching staff. The new teacher has taken on the responsibility for teaching Year 5 and the co-ordination of mathematics across the school. Three teachers will leave the school at the end of the summer term including one who is the literacy coordinator. The school has already appointed three new staff.

Achievement and standards

Evidence indicates that standards remain below average in English and mathematics. In most classes, progress continues to accelerate. In particular, steps taken to boost the achievement of children whose progress was flagging have proved effective. Most of these children are now more securely on track to meet their individual targets. In Year 6, there are indications that more able children have made best progress in mathematics compared to English. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including autistic spectrum disorders, attached to the school's enhanced resource unit, are making satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. Their social development benefits particularly from regular opportunities to work in classes within the mainstream of the school.

Personal development and well-being

Children nearly always behaved well, even when teaching failed to interest them. Just occasionally they took advantage of opportunities to opt out of activities or showed their boredom. Children particularly enjoyed the opportunities to work independently. For example, during an English lesson, children enthusiastically organised themselves to develop and perform scenarios. Children often supported each other by listening attentively during discussions.

Quality of provision

Lessons observed confirm that the quality of teaching in some classes continues to improve. For example, outstanding teaching was seen where children made rapid progress because the lesson was well planned to meet the needs of all children and the teacher kept the pace of learning perpetually challenging. In some classrooms the quality of teaching was satisfactory and in one inadequate. When teaching was satisfactory it did not help children to catch up to where they should be in their learning. In most of the satisfactory lessons there was a lack of challenge for more

able children. Tasks given to the more able children were either the same as those given to other children or were not pitched at the right level to challenge them and ensure they made progress.

It was very evident that in some lessons effective teaching strategies are being finely tuned to aid children's learning. For example, asking children to talk with a partner about their work was very effectively used so that children helped each other understand what they were working on. Another example was the way teachers targeted challenging questions to certain children, making sure they kept them engaged with what was going on and encouraged them to explain their ideas.

The specialist resource provision has been part of the school's improvement programme. An example of the developments that have taken place is the greater focus teachers have on assessing what children have learnt rather than recording the activities they have been involved in.

Teaching assistants are providing very effective support for groups of children in lessons. They kept children on task, explained activities well, and on occasions ensured that the work was adapted so that children made better progress. Teaching assistants also showed considerable patience and skill when working with some of the most vulnerable children.

The quality of lesson planning was often good. In the best examples there was clear reference to how teaching was going to challenge all abilities and how tasks would give children opportunities to make good progress. Some lesson plans referred to evaluations of what had happened in the previous lesson, helping teachers to build on what children had already learnt or reinforce where they had difficulties.

There were good examples of teachers writing evaluative comments in children's books, including constructive feedback and guidance on what to do to improve further. Although this good practice exists there is still some marking which does not clearly identify what children have learnt or what they need to do to improve. This inconsistency was highlighted in the headteacher's monitoring of children's books and the school has rightly identified that the next steps are to agree on what good practice should be the norm in school.

Since the last visit, the school now has two sets of assessments for English and mathematics for each child. Teachers have compared the accuracy of their assessments to make sure that judgements made are consistent. At the time of the last visit, the school had used the first set of assessments to identify groups of children who were not making satisfactory progress but had not evaluated the impact of additional teaching given to these groups. This has now been done and there is clear evidence, for most of the children who received additional support, that their progress has improved and they are back on track to reach their targets. The school has not yet used the assessment data to analyse and evaluate how well different groups are achieving. The deputy headteacher is leading the work on assessment and as part of her remit has worked with staff in the feeder infant school to moderate end of Year 2 writing tests.

The use of academic targets generally continues to be effective. Children know what their targets are and some of the work they are given has helped them to achieve them. The school is beginning to raise expectations by setting more challenging targets for children to achieve by the end of Year 6. For example, the current Year 3 has been set targets that are much higher than the current Years 4, 5 and 6.

Judgement

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

- Improve the lesson planning, and the quality of teaching, so that the work children are given enables them to achieve more and reach the standards of which they are capable by the end of Year 6 – satisfactory
- Ensure assessment is accurate, and used more effectively to track children's progress and improve target setting for all groups – satisfactory

Leadership and management

Following on from the last visit, the headteacher has kept up the rigorous monitoring schedule, which has maintained the momentum that has lead to further improvements. Lesson observations, scrutinies of children's work, and professional discussions with teachers about teaching and learning have all focused in on evaluating what has gone well and what needs to be done next. It is evident that teachers continue to take on board comments for improvement and in most cases this has resulted in better practice.

Since the last visit the deputy headteacher has actively been involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the enhanced resourced unit. Some of this work has been done alongside the headteacher and a senior LA advisor. The deputy headteacher has made clear judgements and raised useful points to improve provision which have been followed.

Although the headteacher and deputy headteacher are now more involved in effective monitoring and evaluation, the role of subject co-ordinators is less developed. Both the mathematics and ICT co-ordinators are recent appointments and there will be a new literacy coordinator as from September. This change over of staff means that plans of action are at very early stages or in the case of literacy have yet to be agreed. Furthermore the literacy, mathematics and ICT coordinators are to form the new senior leadership team (SLT), with the head and deputy, in September and as yet there is no plan of action for this group. The headteacher sees the strategic potential that this team has but its capacity has yet to be proven.

The chair of governors has taken part in the scrutiny of children's work alongside the SLT. She has also visited classrooms and observed teaching and learning. Although this work has enabled the chair of governors to gain a more objective view of the school, other governors have not yet been involved in the same way.

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

- Develop more rigorous monitoring and evaluation skills, at all levels of leadership, and use the information gained from this to bring about more rapid improvement to teaching and learning – satisfactory

External support

The LA has successfully tailored the support they have given which has helped the school consolidate and improve further. Advisers have worked alongside the headteacher supporting and offering guidance on how to improve teaching. There has also been support for the deputy headteacher as she becomes more involved in monitoring and evaluation activities. This support and guidance has meant that the work of the school's leadership team has been quality assured. Other advisory work has been helpful in developing teaching by focusing appropriately on the areas where improvements were needed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the work of the senior leadership team, specifically the work of the subject coordinators within the team, is clearly set out so that its impact can be measured.