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2 September 2008

Mr Jim Tarpey  
The Executive Headteacher  
Humberstone Junior School  
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Humberstone  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE5 1AE

Dear Mr Tarpey

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HUMBERSTONE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Following my visit with Marion Wallace, Additional Inspector, to your school on 7 and 8 July 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 June 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 – good.

Newly qualified teachers (NQT) may be appointed subject to the following conditions. The NQT should be mentored in school by a teacher of proven high quality, and all NQT entitlements must be met in full. Appropriate internal and external development, support and induction must be provided.

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 and Young People's Services for Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Pat Walsh  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF HUMBERSTONE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 7 and 8 July 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the executive headteacher, senior staff, a group of pupils, the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

### Context

The executive headteacher continues to lead and manage the school. The governors and LA have begun the recruitment process to appoint a substantive headteacher for January 2009. There have been further changes to the staffing of the school since the last monitoring inspection. The new Year 3 leader has taken up her post. The Head of Leadership and Learning has been appointed until the end of the summer term 2009, this appointment is funded by the LA. A teacher has been appointed to lead the Year 5 team, she will take up post in September 2008.

### Achievement and standards

The impact of the school's work on improving achievement and standards is satisfactory. The school is robustly tackling the issues for improvement and, as a result, there are now significant aspects of good practice in setting priorities, assessment and teaching. There is an increase in the proportion of pupils making satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress and the school is on track to achieve higher standards in the 2008 national tests in English, mathematics and science than it did in 2007. However, there have been significant peaks and troughs in pupils' progress because good practice was not consistent across all year groups. The precise focus on improving teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 5 has resulted in improved learning and consequently the pupils in all year groups are now, on the whole, making satisfactory progress. The school has also refined its systems to ensure that any underachievement is identified quickly and tackled through a range of intervention packages and catch up programmes to accelerate pupils' progress. The school's own data shows that these actions are successful. The school is successful in identifying strategies that work well for one group of pupils and applying them to other groups within the school. The work of the teaching assistants is now better focused on planning with teachers to pinpoint areas of weakness so that remedial action can be carefully targeted. Consequently, pupils with additional needs have made satisfactory, and often good, progress overall.

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

- raise standards and eliminate significant areas of underachievement, particularly in mathematics and English – satisfactory.

## Personal development and well-being

The pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their consistently good attendance. The majority are sensible, mature and sensitive to the needs of others in lessons and around school. Good attitudes and behaviour are underpinned by good relationships. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and feel their views are considered.

## Quality of provision

During the inspection good teaching was observed in several lessons. Inspection evidence and the school's monitoring information confirm that the number of good lessons is increasing. No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection. However, pupils have ground to make up in all year groups and so the amount of progress they make over time is often satisfactory. Although the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve it is not yet consistent enough to ensure pupils make accelerated progress in all lessons and over time. Pupils acknowledge the improved teaching. One pupil reflecting the views of many said, ' Learning is much better now, it is more fun because the teachers tell you what to do better.' Lessons are well organised, strong relationships and good attitudes and behaviour contribute to a positive climate for learning. Planning identifies what pupils are expected to learn and teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils. However, planning does not always highlight how teaching will challenge the range of pupils' abilities. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to involve pupils in their own learning. In the better lessons, for example in Year 6, tasks are well matched to the pupils' ability. However, in other year groups this is more variable. Consequently, pupils do not always make the rapid progress they could, especially the more able. Pupils say that work is sometimes too easy in mathematics, writing and science. Some teachers monitor targets in pupils' work well, but this good practice does not always happen in all year groups. Pupils are aware of their targets in classrooms and in their books. However, they are less aware of exactly what they have to do to improve their own individual work. Sound progress has been made in developing pupils' ability to comment and reflect on their own learning. There is some effective marking that shows pupils what they have to do to improve, but this is not yet consistent throughout the school. There is still evidence of work that has not been rigorously marked and does not show pupils clearly how to improve. The staff work hard to plan an interesting curriculum that pupils enjoy. Pupils recognise and appreciate the improvements in the activities offered. 'We do more fun things now especially in science.' Curriculum planning is satisfactory and linked effectively to a theme, but is not always closely matched to pupils' abilities.

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

- improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching in order to accelerate the progress that pupils make in lessons and over time – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

The executive headteacher continues to provide a strong impetus for improvement. He has been particularly successful in securing the involvement of all staff in moving the school forward through involving them in action planning. Leadership has been

strengthened by the temporary appointment of a senior leader with responsibility for improving the quality of learning. Her role in coaching staff and providing feedback on lessons has resulted in improved teaching and learning in Years 3 and 5. Strategic thinking and planning for the future have improved and these are beginning to have a noticeable impact on the quality of provision. Year group leaders and subject leaders have clear expectations of their roles and have benefited from appropriate training to strengthen their leadership skills. There is an effective programme for monitoring and evaluating the impact of action planning, and leaders are playing an increasing role in monitoring progress in their subject areas. Teaching and learning and pupils' work are monitored regularly, and areas for further development identified. The middle leaders have welcomed the sharp, focused agenda and the regularity with which they meet to discuss pupil performance. Lines of communication at all levels, through the pupil progress meetings and regular Raising Achievement Plan (RAP) reviews, have strengthened appreciably, and are a key factor in accelerating the progress of a growing number of pupils. Morale is high and leaders at all levels are clear about the next steps to secure continued improvement. The governing body is improving its knowledge of the school's work. The chair of governors continues to play a pivotal role in supporting developments and driving improvement. Governors are beginning to evaluate the impact of improvement through first hand knowledge, such as the scrutiny of pupils' work, the inclusion working group, and analysis of performance data. The establishment of the curriculum and standards committee is providing effective opportunities for governors to improve their strategic overview and to begin to evaluate the impact of developments. The planned programme for governor visits to classrooms is delayed because of consultation on the proposed federation. However, the more rigorous approach to monitoring has resulted in all governors having a more accurate view of what has been achieved and what still needs to be done.

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

- strengthen leadership at all levels by developing robust school self-evaluation and effective improvement planning – good.

### External support

The local authority (LA) continues to provide well focused support to the school in tackling its action points from the last inspection. The school improvement advisor has liaised effectively with the school to ensure that the support is timely and responds to specific development needs. LA consultant support to improve the policy and practice for pupils with additional needs has been welcomed by the school, and resulted in a more structured approach to inclusion. The school has benefited from additional support in improving teaching in Year 6 through consultant mentoring and training in the core subjects. Following lengthy consultation between the governors and LA, the plans to federate the school with the infant school have been put on hold for the foreseeable future. However, the governors intend to strengthen links between the two schools. The LA is providing significant and welcomed funding to develop the accommodation and learning environment in both schools.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that target setting and marking are used consistently and effectively to guide pupils in knowing how to improve their work.
- Sharpen differentiation in planning and in practice to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met effectively through challenging tasks.