

17 October 2008

Mrs M Sellers  
Saighton CofE Primary School  
Saighton Lane  
Saighton  
Chester  
Cheshire  
CH3 6EG

Dear Mrs Sellers

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SAIGHTON CofE  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit to your school on 15 and 16 October 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 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 – good

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 Children's Services for Cheshire and Director of Education for the Diocese of Chester.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett  
H M Inspector



Report from the second monitoring inspection: 15–16 October 2008

## Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, teachers, members of the governing body, parents, pupils, representatives of the local authority (LA) and the Diocese of Chester, observed lessons in each class and scrutinised documentation.

## Context

Since the first monitoring visit in April 2008 two teachers have left the school, a full-time teacher and the part-time special needs coordinator. The full-time teacher has been replaced and the special needs coordinator's duties have been taken over by one of the teachers.

Since April the classrooms have been reorganised and structural improvements made. There have been significant changes to the Reception class, which has a new and larger covered outdoor area. The Year 3/4 class has been remodelled and is now much lighter and brighter.

## Achievement and standards

The results of the 2008 national tests for 11-year-olds were an improvement on those of previous years. Although there are no national comparisons available at present, standards in English rose significantly, with over half of pupils achieving the highest level possible (Level 5). Standards in mathematics stayed broadly the same but nearly all pupils achieved the levels expected of 11-year-olds in science, a much better performance than the previous year.

Caution is required in interpreting these results. There are relatively few pupils in each year group and natural variations in pupils' capabilities and aptitudes make significant differences to the overall standards in the national tests. The school's tracking records show that most pupils make good progress. However, some year groups are on track to reach higher standards than others. Pupils who are identified as falling behind in the core skills of literacy and numeracy receive special support from teaching assistants. Such pupils often make very good progress and catch up quickly with other pupils.

Pupils' progress in the lessons observed was good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, now taught as a separate class, have settled well in their new classroom. They enjoy the freedom of and opportunities within the new outside area. They have made a good start to early learning and parents are pleased with their progress. The inspection report of December 2007 highlighted issues in mathematics and science within Key Stage 2. Pupils are now making much better progress in these subjects.

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

- Raise standards, especially in mathematics and science, in Key Stage 2 – good
- Make sure pupils make at least satisfactory progress, especially in Key Stage 2 – good

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy school and they are making good progress in their personal development. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle is particularly good and older pupils believe they are now healthier and fitter than they were. Pupils are very knowledgeable about environmental issues, such as recycling and energy conservation. They are becoming more independent in their learning as a result of teachers consciously planning to promote independence in lessons and in homework. Children take responsibility well, and parents are particularly happy about the way older pupils look after younger ones.

The concern expressed in the previous monitoring letter about pupils' attitudes has largely disappeared. Discussion with all stakeholders suggests that such attitudes were a legacy from the past and are disappearing as the school moves on. Even so, older pupils, in particular, feel that they could do better still if they tried a little harder. Attendance is broadly average.

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

- Ensure pupils behave consistently well - good

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. Teaching of outstanding quality was observed during the visit, in science and mathematics. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much improved. Teachers are relaxed and confident, secure in their knowledge of the levels at which pupils are working and of the progress they are making. Their ways of managing behaviour has improved and sanctions are applied consistently in all classes. Teaching assistants continue to make an important contribution to learning in lessons and to children who need extra help. Teaching assistants are well qualified, and, as suggested in the previous monitoring letter, could play an even more prominent role in supporting teaching and learning in the mixed-age classes. Planning for lessons and for homework is of good quality. Each lesson has a clear focus understood by the pupils. Work is generally well matched to pupils' capabilities and interests and there is good use of information and communication technology to make lessons interesting and exciting. Where lessons are less effective, this is usually to do with teaching that is not fully successful in meeting the widely different needs of pupils in a mixed-age class.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and often highly relevant and interesting for pupils, one of the main reasons why they enjoy school. For example, pupils recently

made a film about the history of the village that won national recognition. Care, guidance and support are good. The headteacher has ensured all policies for the safeguarding of pupils have been overhauled and put in good order and the systems for checking pupils' progress are rigorously evaluated.

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

- Improve the levels of challenge and support for pupils in lessons so that pupils achieve as well as they can - good

### Leadership and management

The momentum for improvement has been maintained. The headteacher, staff and governors, supported by the LA and the Diocese of Chester, are fully focused on the issues identified in the inspection report and in the previous monitoring letter. The issue about tracking pupils' progress has been tackled with vigour and systems are now fully embedded in the routine work of teachers and subject coordinators.

The headteacher uses the resources at her disposal well. She has the confidence of parents who recognise the improvements that have been made. She has built good links with many partners, particularly the Education Improvement Partnership of local primary, special and secondary schools. The school has a good ethos, one that is friendly and caring. It is well organised, runs smoothly and has a strong, positive team spirit, a consequence of a unified staff that is gaining in confidence. Teachers are consolidating their own leadership roles for subjects and aspects and teaching assistants play a full part in the life of the school. All staff are highly motivated to become more effective still and they regularly undertake professional development. Governors are better organised and informed and more involved in the life of the school. In all, the school is building the capacity for further improvement well.

A great deal has been achieved. However, as this is a small school, it is more susceptible to changes in staff than a larger school. The school is facing several such changes at present and leadership and management will be challenged to maintain and continue the good progress that has already been achieved.

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management so that it ensures all groups of pupils achieve at least satisfactorily - good
- Implement rigorous systems to track pupils' progress and to analyse pupils' test data, in order to set appropriate targets and use these to raise achievement – outstanding

## External support

The support provided by the LA continues to be of good quality. It has been adapted sensitively to the changing needs of the school, with effective consultant support for a range of subjects and aspects coupled with a rigorous holding to account by the school improvement partner. The LA is rightly considering how its support should change as the school becomes increasingly effective and self-sustaining.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes even more effectively.
- Ensure that changes in staffing do not compromise the quality of what has been achieved.