

## PROTECT-INSPECTION

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9 November 2009

Mrs Paula Martin  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Martin

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Ravensdale Junior School

Following my visit with Glynn Storer Additional Inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 November 2009, 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 October 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since the last monitoring visit – good.

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 Corporate Director for Children and Young People for Derby City.

Yours sincerely

Judith Matharu  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Ravensdale Junior School

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 4-5 November 2009

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, analysed pupils' work and talked with pupils. They also met with the headteacher, two members of the leadership team, two governors and a representative from the local authority.

## Context

A new deputy head teacher has been in place since September 2009. Since the previous visit, there has been one other substantive change to the school's staffing. At the time of the monitoring visit, two teachers were absent through illness.

## Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The improving picture evident at the last monitoring visit in terms of attainment and achievement has been sustained. The results of 2009 indicate that most gains have been made in English. This is due to the improvements made in teaching literacy and the impact of a good range of well-focussed interventions introduced in the past twelve months to improve reading and writing. In order to sustain the gains made in writing and improve the performance of boys particularly, the school continues to focus on this with a range of writing improvement initiatives underway this year. As anticipated, there were fewer gains made in pupils' performance in mathematics in 2009; the school is in the early stages of implementing interventions here and the impact of these has yet to be realised. The school's careful analysis of the 2009 results has identified a number of gender issues to address. The performance of higher ability girls in mathematics is a target for improvement as too few of these are achieving the higher level. Nevertheless, overall the improvement trends evident in English and science are encouraging.

The school's current tracking data is clear and detailed and the subsequent analysis indicates that increasing numbers of pupils are making expected or better progress across the school. This is due to the increased level of challenge evident in lessons and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers are increasingly confident in their own assessments of progress and use these more routinely to plan learning. The school's improvement work in the use of assessment continues this term following the appointment of the deputy headteacher, who has expertise in assessment. She is already contributing strongly with a new assessment policy and staff training this term.

Lesson observations during the monitoring visit confirmed this improving picture of pupil progress. In ten out of seventeen lessons observed at this visit, pupils were



making at least good progress due to good and occasionally outstanding teaching that suitably challenged pupils and ensured that their engagement in learning was consistently good.

Progress on the area for improvement identified in the inspection in October 2008

- Raise standards and increase the rate of pupils' progress throughout the school – satisfactory

### The effectiveness of provision

Teaching has improved overall since the inspection of 2008 and continues to do so. Teachers are keen to develop their teaching skills and have worked hard to improve the quality of their work. When lessons are most successful, there are several notable features. Firstly, the lesson planning is thoughtful, detailed and meets the needs of all pupils, and includes a range of carefully chosen, relevant learning activities to challenge pupils and promote their interest and enjoyment. A variety of assessment, including peer and self-assessment help pupils to understand how they are doing and what is required to improve further. Consequently, there is a positive atmosphere evident in these lessons with pupils demonstrating initiative and contributing their ideas with keen enthusiasm.

In good lessons, the level of challenge is high and creates a learning atmosphere that is lively and productive, with pupils finding pleasure in their learning. Pupils are eager to succeed and particularly enjoy paired and group work, which is becoming a strong feature and encouraging independent learning. For example, Year 6 pupils supported each other exceptionally well in an outstanding numeracy lesson, displaying maturity and a real enthusiasm for mathematics.

The use of interactive technology continues to improve. Teachers are now more routinely using the interactive white boards in their classrooms to support teaching and enrich learning. The use of interesting resources to enhance learning and inspire interest is improving; for example in an outstanding Year 4 literacy lesson when the well-chosen short film 'Hoverbike' fired pupils' imaginations and prompted their lively discussions.

Teaching assistants continue to work effectively to support individuals in lessons. They know their pupils well and work alongside teachers in a supportive and encouraging manner. The school's commitment to an inclusive approach results in very good support for pupils with a range of special educational needs in order for them to make good progress in their learning. Further, the roles of teaching assistants in leading an excellent range of intervention sessions have been instrumental in the literacy improvements previously noted.

Where lessons remain satisfactory, the learning frequently remains too passive and pupils are required to listen to their teacher for too long; consequently their attention wanes. The level of challenge in such lessons remains variable, with too many individual tasks that are fairly mundane and lacking in appeal to pupils. As a result, although pupils usually continue to behave well, their enjoyment of learning is diminished and progress slows.

Progress on the areas identified for improvement by the inspection in October 2008:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making effective use of accurate assessment information to plan work that presents a suitable challenge for pupils of all abilities – good

#### The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher has sustained her vigorous drive for ongoing improvement. She continues to lead the staff with clarity and purpose and is prepared to make strategic changes in order to achieve the required improvements. All of the year teams have been changed - which was potentially daunting for some staff. However, in response, the staff team continue to work hard and make the changes required in their practice in order to accelerate pupils' progress. They demonstrate good teamwork in joint planning and developing the curriculum in their new teams. The headteacher has an accurate view of individual teachers' strengths and areas for development; her monitoring of lessons undertaken earlier this term confirms the improving picture emerging at this visit.

The leadership capacity of the senior team has significantly improved through the appointment of the new deputy headteacher. She has made a confident start this term and is contributing well to the school's assessment improvement work. The work of the governing body has improved considerably; they are well trained for their role, better organised and informed and increasingly hold the school to account for standards and progress. Many aspects of their practice are becoming outstanding. Governors are supportive of the school but also question its work suitably and are increasingly clear about the priorities for action. Requirements for safeguarding are met.

The whole school system to track pupils' progress continues to work effectively. This provides teachers and school leaders with clear indications of pupils' attainment and progress. This information is now being used well to tackle any underachievement. All teachers are now clear about their roles in monitoring pupil progress and have regular discussions with the headteacher about progress issues. The identification of any underachievement is made more quickly and suitable interventions implemented in response. For example, the analysis made of the 2009 results by the numeracy coordinator is sharp and accurate and the subsequent plan in place to address the issues arising is promising.

At this visit, an analysis was made of feedback provided to pupils through the marking of their work. The picture is encouraging but inconsistent. Some excellent feedback was noted, particularly in English, which is helpful for pupils in recognising strengths and identifying aspects for improvement. However, this is not universally so and there are inconsistencies evident, particularly in mathematics where the quality of feedback and the provision of small step targets to improve progress are variable.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2008:

- Ensure governors and staff with leadership responsibilities are able to contribute effectively to self-evaluation and school improvement – good
- Develop a robust system for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress in order to identify underachievement and take appropriate action where progress is insufficient – good

#### External support

Since the last monitoring visit, the local authority has worked with the school to resolve several of the previously mentioned concerns about various accommodation issues. This has been welcomed by the school as it has enabled key intervention work to continue and an area for teacher joint planning to be established. There remain several issues to resolve; for example, there is currently no library facility in the school and the space available for first aid is inadequate for this purpose. These are matters for continuing discussion between the school and local authority in drawing up plans for future building development.

#### Priorities for further improvement

Ensure that the quality of feedback to pupils on their work is consistent across the school.