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5 December 2007

Mrs G Mantom  
The Headteacher  
Dogsthorpe Infants School  
Central Avenue  
Peterborough  
Cambridgeshire  
PE1 4LH

Dear Mrs Mantom

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF DOGSTHORPE  
INFANTS SCHOOL**

Following my visit with John Foster and Helen Ranger, Additional Inspectors to your school on 20 and 21 November 2007, 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 January 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 may not 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 Director of Education for Peterborough.

Yours sincerely

Alan Alder

Her Majesty's Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF Dogsthorpe Infants School

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 20 and 21 November 2007

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior assistant headteacher, subject leaders, a group of pupils, the chair of governors and two other governors, and two representatives from the local authority.

### Context

Since the last visit, six teachers have left the school and six teachers have joined. There have been changes to the school's leadership team with the addition of two assistant headteachers. There is a new chair of governors.

### Achievement and standards

Details of pupils' performance in the 2007 Year 2 assessments were given in the last monitoring letter.

In the lessons observed during this visit, the progress pupils made was good in 27 percent of the lessons observed, satisfactory in 55% and inadequate in 18%. This is an improvement on the last visit when there was no good progress. The amount that was inadequate was the same as now. Progress is slowest in Year 2.

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour continues to be good. They are enthusiastic about school and enjoy lessons. Good relationships are evident in all age groups. Attendance is satisfactory and is encouraged well by the school. However, a significant number of pupils arrive late. This disrupts their learning and the learning of others, as teachers have to take time to settle them to activities that have already started.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved and the number of good lessons is increasing. However, there are still some inadequate lessons. Along with the number which are satisfactory this means that too many pupils are still not making the rapid progress they need to make up lost ground.

There is now a greater focus on pupil's learning in lessons, and there is less of merely ensuring that they complete the tasks set for them. There is a much more effective means of sharing the lesson's objectives with pupils and of telling them how their knowledge, understanding and skills should improve as a result. Activities are increasingly taking into account the abilities of the full range of pupils. In some lessons though, one of the three ability groups did not make the progress it should have. The monitoring of pupils' work during the lesson by the class teachers is not sufficient to detect this.

The effectiveness of the teaching assistants has much improved. They work closely with teachers at the lesson planning stage and give well focused support to individuals and groups. Both they and the teachers are more aware of any pupil who is having difficulties with the work. This generally is either acted upon immediately or leads to the pupil having additional small group support. The number of practical activities has risen. This is particularly good in Reception where the use of the outdoor areas has been developed well. The new interactive whiteboards are being used enthusiastically and teachers' confidence in their use is growing. Teachers' questioning skills are better and are used to check and extend pupils' learning. However, in all year groups, pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their speaking skills in general or to extend their vocabulary.

The quality and accuracy of the assessment of pupils' work is improving. The last monitoring inspection found that some assessment of National Curriculum levels was inaccurate. In response, teachers have received more training and their assessment has been moderated regularly. Some procedures are used consistently, such as the 'Rocket' assessment of each pupil's writing, to check progress. This is then used to set pupils a target for the next stage of learning. An analysis of last year's Year 2 assessments has identified weaknesses in pupils' understanding of some mathematical vocabulary and in their use of phonics. Lessons observed during the monitoring inspection were well targeted on improving these areas. The curriculum has been adapted to ensure that enough time is spent in developing pupils' language and numeracy skills. In each class an extended amount of time is spent on developing pupils' knowledge of letter sounds. Whilst this has taken some time allocation from other subjects, these are still covered adequately. The current allocation of time to the major areas of literacy and numeracy is appropriate given the current low standards.

The marking of pupils' day-to-day work is neither thorough, nor helpful. Most is encouraging but it too rarely gives pupils clear feedback on their achievements or identifies the next step in learning. The school has very recently produced a policy aimed at developing this area further.

The necessary improvements to safeguarding arrangements have been made. These now meet national requirements. Risk assessments are carried out well, for example for visits out of school.

Progress on the areas of improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics as a matter of urgency by improving the quality of teaching and learning – inadequate since January 2007 but satisfactory since the monitoring inspection of June 2007
- Improve the quality and accuracy of teachers' assessment and its use in planning the next steps in learning – satisfactory
- Use assessment data effectively to check pupils' progress over time and to identify underachievement quickly so that action can be taken to halt further decline – satisfactory

## Leadership and management

The monitoring of the school's work by its leaders, governors and the local authority has improved. It is focussed well on the weaker aspects of the school's work, such as teaching and learning. Evaluation is more purposeful because there are now more quantitative targets in the school's and the local authority's plans to check progress against. There is some generosity in the school's judgements on lesson quality. This is because there is a tendency to focus more on teachers' compliance with the school's teaching policy, and less on how well pupils are learning. Nevertheless the headteacher is aware of areas of weakness in teaching and its effect on learning. She is taking determined steps to bring about improvement. Although the progress of pupils is being tracked, based upon half-termly assessments, and progress in lessons is assessed by teachers and teaching assistants, there is as yet no means by which the senior leaders are quickly alerted to any pupils or classes who are falling behind.

The governing body is much more involved with the school's improvement. It is providing more challenge. Governors visit the school more frequently, both to monitor progress against the action plan, and to play their part in monitoring and evaluating the school's progress.

The roles of subject leaders and team leaders have now been clearly defined. The support they provide for teaching has improved. The awareness of accountability of all those with responsibility for improving pupils' learning is more pervasive.

The school is now making progress, though is still heavily dependent on the support of the local authority.

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

- Improve the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance and prioritise the steps that need to be taken to secure improvement - satisfactory

## External support

The local authority has provided significant support for the school. The support has been wide ranging and has been well-based on the school's needs. The evidence from the inspection confirms the school's judgement that this is now bringing about improvement. There is a much clearer set of strategies for improving teaching.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Take urgent steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Year 2.
- Senior leaders should ensure they are aware of any pupils or classes whose work is causing concern and monitor their progress.