

13 December 2007

Miss J Lloyd-Williams
Thorne Moorends West Road Primary School
West Road
Moorends
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN8 4LH

Dear Miss Lloyd-Williams

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF THORNE MOORENDS
WEST ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Jane Hughes and Joan McKenna, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 11 and 12 December, 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 – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

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 Education Standards for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely



John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF THORNE MOORENDS WEST ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 11–12 December 2007

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited lessons, and scrutinised documents and samples of pupils' work. Discussions took place with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, a forum of teaching and non-teaching staff, and pupils. Inspectors also spoke with the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

The new headteacher has been in post for one term, as have a number of middle and senior leaders. On-site additional management support has been withdrawn. Staff attendance has improved significantly, and the school has filled all of its vacant posts with the exception of the manager for teaching and learning. A Key Stage 1 teacher, who has resigned, will leave at the end of December. The vice chair has become chair of governors, following the recent and sudden death of the previous chair.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement and the standards they attained in national tests in 2006 and 2007 were inadequate at both key stages overall. In 2007, standards in reading at Key Stage 1 improved, as did standards in English at Key Stage 2, but there was further deterioration in all other areas. Unusually, boys outperformed girls, whose progress in science and mathematics was particularly poor, while pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made broadly satisfactory progress overall.

Despite these poor national test outcomes, scrutiny of the in-year progress of pupils, as reflected in the results of the school's latest in-house tests, provides a more encouraging picture. These suggest that many more pupils are beginning to make the expected rates of progress. A significant minority of pupils have made more than two thirds of a level progression over the past two terms. The caveat is that these rates of progression are often from very low baselines, with pupils making up some of the lost ground of previous underachievement. Nevertheless, for most the deterioration has been reversed. There does however remain some poor progress, particularly in writing.

A key feature of the improvement process has been the coordinated way in which staff have begun regularly to assess, monitor and evaluate the progress pupils are making. Individual staff are using this data to assist planning and set targets for pupils. An assessment calendar is being followed and teachers are routinely updating

their records of pupils' attainment. Staff are paying greater attention to the individual needs of pupils – including the most and least able. Better focused planning and the targeted support programmes are helping to boost pupils' learning. Pupils are clearer about their targets, while teaching assistants have become more involved in planning their work with pupils, and this is improving their overall effectiveness. Grouping pupils by ability is promoting rapid progress and staff are becoming more consistent in developing differentiated approaches to learning. The support for guided reading and writing from the local authority's consultants, along with the whole-school emphasis on improving spelling, has also been successful.

While the wealth of data individual staff are collecting is useful, the school would benefit from analysing this information centrally. The school is not in a position to show which pupils are on track, exceeding or falling behind their targets, or to highlight any patterns of relative achievement or underachievement by different groups of pupils.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- drive up standards – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that the atmosphere in classrooms is harmonious. Pupils have a clear understanding of the code of conduct and abide by class 'Golden Rules'. Instances of poor behaviour by a disruptive minority, found at the inspection in January, have disappeared and the incidence of exclusion is low. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils like the emphasis on healthy and safe lifestyles and try to put some of the examples they see around school into action. Many take advantage of healthy options at lunchtime and participate in sporting activities to keep fit. Pupils collaborate well in lessons and offer one another support when required. However, their skills in literacy and numeracy, although improving, remain low overall and do not yet securely promote their future economic well-being.

The school makes clear its new expectations with regard to regular and punctual attendance, and pupils are eager to win prizes and the admiration of their peers when their attendance beats that of others. Pupils encourage each other to come to school and to avoid unnecessary absence. Older pupils are increasingly aware of how important school is to their future success. Some are able to illustrate that, because of their more regular attendance, they are reaching higher standards in their work. This is because they no longer miss vital chunks of learning. They recognise the importance of reliability and punctuality and realise this is a key element for their future success and well-being. The headteacher, administrative staff and representatives from outside agencies work effectively to encourage parents to understand the importance of regular attendance. Fewer parents keep their children off school unnecessarily, although they persist in taking children out of school for

term-time holidays. Pupils' attendance continues to rise and has improved since the time of the last visit.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- improve attendance – satisfactory.

Quality of provision

There are some improvements to the overall quality of teaching and learning – not least because of the increased stability in staffing. The school has a strong commitment to improving teachers' skills and staff have benefited from regular training, mentoring and guidance to hone their existing skills. The monitoring of teachers' planning by senior and middle managers is paying dividends and has contributed a greater consistency and improved quality. Short-term planning clearly identifies the strategies staff intend to use with a range of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or with particular gifts and talents. Pupils of all abilities have a secure understanding of their academic or personal targets so they know what they are aiming for in order to improve.

Teachers enable all pupils to make the most of their time in lessons because they have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response. As a result, pupils concentrate well, persevere with tasks and generally produce an acceptable quantity and quality of work. Pupils say they enjoy taking more responsibility for their own learning. For instance, Year 5 pupils responded very well when they took on the role of Babushka and answered questions posed by classmates about her life.

Teachers usually deploy teaching assistants effectively although, on some occasions, they do not have sufficient opportunity to take the initiative and merely follow the teacher's lead. They work well when they have a very clear understanding of their role and support pupils' learning precisely throughout the lesson with individually targeted activities and questions or prompts, or when working with small groups of pupils, outside of lessons. As with teachers, teaching assistants generally use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and to consolidate new learning.

The quality of marking has improved in many instances and often provides good academic guidance for pupils to follow. Nevertheless, some marking still lacks sufficient detail in terms of how to improve a piece of work and there are missed opportunities to reinforce good grammar when teachers assess different subjects.

The new inclusion manager collates information about pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or particular gifts and talents in order to inform the school's support programme for these groups of pupils. Regular reviews take place to check pupils' progress and to identify what they need to do next to improve. Parents and pupils contribute to the review process and have copies of individual education plans so they know what is expected and the levels of support required.

Recent actions taken have enhanced the consistency of curriculum planning and delivery. The time given to different subjects has been standardised across all year groups. For example, all classes from Year 1 to Year 6 have a full hour for literacy and half an hour for guided reading every day. As well as the amount of time across year groups now being consistent, the time given to literacy is greater than it was at the inspection in January. Weekly monitoring of the quality of planning and a common format are improving consistency across the school, with feedback given to individuals on issues raised. The organisation of teaching groups for literacy and numeracy has changed to help teachers provide challenge that is more appropriate for pupils. Pupils within pairs of year groups are now organised into three groups according to ability, narrowing the range of needs for which each teacher has to cater. This has helped to provide greater focus to teachers' work. The range of activities for the pupils within groups is now better suited to pupils' needs. However, assessment information about individual pupils' levels of attainment is not used enough to bring enough precision to this planning. Although the activities to promote greater consistency are helpful, they do not ensure sufficient consistency in the quality of lessons.

The school has taken satisfactory steps to improve the provision for literacy. There has been a particular focus on improving guided reading sessions, and the school has purchased some new resources. In addition teachers in Years 3 and 4 have had training from a local authority consultant on carrying out reading activities with a group, while in Years 1 and 2, teachers have had input from an advanced skills teacher on activities to promote pupils' independent working skills. Monitoring indicates that there is a greater similarity of approach across classes. Other developments to improve reading and writing have also occurred, although it is too early to judge the impact of these. The school recognises it is still at the early stages of improving provision.

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

- improve the quality of teaching so that pupils of all capabilities are fully challenged and understand how to improve their work – satisfactory
- improve curricular arrangements for literacy and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The new headteacher has been industrious and systematic since her arrival. A raft of new procedures have been set in train and she has worked successfully to establish her credibility with all stakeholders. Staff highlight her clear vision and sense of purpose as key factors in gaining their support and facilitating the progress achieved over the past term. Her previous experience of working in a school in special measures has been invaluable and allowed her to 'hit the ground running'. The very capable deputy headteacher and a number of other appointments to the senior and middle management teams have ably supported her. Importantly, staff are being involved in decision making and increasingly held to account. A rigorous cycle of monitoring planning and lesson observations has been introduced. The policy for

performance management has been reconstituted, with a timetable for implementation agreed.

Leaders and managers are raising the overall quality of provision, with progress secured across all improvement areas. Major issues with staffing stability are all but resolved and staff report that they have full confidence in the school's leadership. Standards are beginning to rise and the quality of teaching and learning is becoming more consistent. There is an improved awareness and confidence among staff over assessment and target setting. Attendance continues to rise and there is greater consistency in curriculum planning and teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The enhanced arrangements for meeting the needs of the most and least able pupils are improving their achievement. Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of middle managers and providing them with additional training have increased their effectiveness and boosted overall management capacity. A well thought out plan to develop additional study rooms for pupils and a workroom for staff has improved the accommodation. Senior managers have also undertaken a robust review of the school's action plan and reframed certain priorities. However, a number of tasks detailed in the action plan have missed the timeline for completion.

The headteacher has worked hard to enlist the support of parents to underpin these improvement strategies and parents speak highly of the school and its staff. Governors continue to provide appropriate challenge and support to the school and they fulfil their duties shrewdly.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- establish stable staffing arrangements – satisfactory.

External support

The high level of support the school continues to receive from the local authority to tackle the identified issues is having an increasingly positive impact. The quality of guided reading in school is improving because of an effective link with a local school.

Priorities for further improvement

- The priorities for further improvement continue to be the key issues previously identified by the last inspection.