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22 May 2008

Mrs S Smith  
The Headteacher  
St Michael's C of E Aided Primary School  
Back Lane  
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Wiltshire  
SN8 2BP

Dear Mrs Smith

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ST MICHAEL'S C OF E  
AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit to your school on 13 May 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 July 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 be appointed subject to the following qualifications. Given the size of the school it has the capacity to support one newly qualified teacher.

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 for Children and Education for Wiltshire County Council and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Salisbury.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF ST MICHAEL'S C OF E AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 13 May 2008

### Evidence

The inspector jointly observed one lesson with the headteacher, scrutinised documents and pupils' work, and met with the headteacher, teaching staff, the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority (LA). The inspector also talked with pupils during the lesson observed and informally at breaktimes.

### Context

The staffing and class structure remain the same as at the monitoring inspection in January 2008, with six classes and mixed age groups for the older pupils. At the time of the monitoring inspection one teacher was absent due to long term illness.

### Achievement and standards

The school continues to address the legacy of underachievement identified at the inspection in July 2007. The effective assessment tracking procedures are now embedded within the school and the system is used well to monitor the progress made by individual pupils in each of the six terms. Pupil progress meetings with the headteacher each term ensure that teachers are accountable for assessing progress and planning the next steps in learning for individuals and groups in their classes. Following these meetings, teachers also work in key stage groups to ensure that targeted groups and individuals receive planned support for specific areas of learning. The scrutiny of work in English, mathematics and science every six weeks and cycle of observations of teaching by the headteacher and subject coordinators support the drive to identify underachievement early and implement measures for improvement. The result of this close progress tracking is that the end of year predictions for Year 6 pupils' overall assessments in English, mathematics and science look close to the targets for the expected and higher levels set for them. Detailed assessments in writing indicate that the target at the higher level in English may be missed by a small margin. However, the school's thorough self-evaluation is accurate in identifying underachievement and notes, rightly, that there is still more work to do to improve further pupils' achievement across the school.

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

- improve pupils' progress and raise standards in all subjects, particularly mathematics and science – satisfactory.

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and have been maintained since the last monitoring inspection. Relationships with adults in the school and other pupils contribute well to the working atmosphere of the school. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. Pupils are happy and friendly. In the science lesson observed,

Year 2 pupils were eager to discuss their findings using their senses and could use resources sensibly. At lunchtime, Year 6 pupils were keen to describe the writing assessment they had just undertaken explaining clearly how they had tackled the task.

### Quality of provision

The school continues to work hard to improve the quality of teaching. A regular cycle for monitoring teaching by the headteacher and the subject coordinators for mathematics and science is now well established. The confidence and skill of coordinators to judge teaching and learning and report back to staff have improved. The scrutiny of work every six weeks underlines the drive for improvement. The science lesson about senses observed during the monitoring inspection displayed effective classroom management with activities planned to engage pupils' interest and increase their learning. Pupils were encouraged to discuss their findings in pairs based on practical activities and to share their conclusions with the class group. There was a good emphasis on the use of correct vocabulary to describe findings. The school's self-evaluation notes correctly that lessons have clearer objectives, differentiation is targeted more effectively, activities are more closely matched to teaching, and teachers model strategies well. However, there is still some work to be done to ensure that the pitch of lessons is consistently appropriate for all ability groups.

The headteacher and staff have developed an effective system for tracking pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and, more recently, science. This system is now well embedded in the life of the school and used successfully to highlight and focus resources on weaker areas in subjects. For example, the system was used effectively when the pupil tracking in February highlighted slower progress in writing in Years 4, 5 and 6 which led to more focused teaching on extended writing. The result of this was increased progress noted in the April assessments placing pupils back on track to achieve the targets at the expected level for writing over the whole year. The effective and widespread use of tracking for individuals and groups is a very important development for the school and represents the key factor in judging overall progress since the last monitoring inspection to be good.

The quality of marking has improved since the last monitoring inspection. All marking makes reference to the learning objectives in the lesson. There are examples of good marking which is evaluative, gives appropriate encouragement, challenges pupils' thinking and invites a response which takes learning further. Overall, teachers are becoming more consistent in informing pupils of the next steps in their learning and there is more evidence of children responding to this. It is clear from the school's self-evaluation and the evidence in books that work is under way to develop the use of pupils' self assessment against success criteria and there are some good examples of this, particularly in literacy. However, this is still work in progress and yet to be embedded in all areas of the curriculum.

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

- make sure that teaching is closely matched to all pupils' needs and that all teachers have high enough expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining – satisfactory

ensure that regular and frequent checks are made on pupils' attainment and progress – good

- provide pupils with clear guidance on what they are doing well and how they can improve their performance – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

Throughout the school there is a clear commitment to improve provision and raise achievement. The headteacher, supported by the governors, has led the school well through some challenging circumstances. Her evaluation of the work of the school is robust and accurate. Effective work by the governors' evaluation and communication committees has enabled the school to be held to account for improvement and to communicate to the community the steps taken in the school's development. The systems for the evaluation of teaching and progress in learning are now firmly in place and staff understand how to use them to improve standards and achievement. Together with this, governors are more confident in using the information in the regular reports from the headteacher to ask questions about the rate and scale of improvement. The full impact of these monitoring and evaluation systems is not yet apparent, but the school is well placed to make further improvements in standards and achievement attained by pupils.

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

- rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' progress and take swift action for improvement – good.

### External support

The local authority has continued to provide a good level of support. The most recent work has focused on support for the science coordinator in observing lessons and providing feedback to teachers. Further work has included the development of science teaching with all teachers. This has resulted in greater confidence displayed by the coordinator in monitoring science teaching and learning and a raised profile for the subject. The support of the advisory headteacher continues to be effective. She is now, rightly, developing more of a monitoring role as the school improves and embeds systems for self-evaluation.

### Priorities for further improvement

No specific further priorities were identified.