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7 December 2010

Mr J Sohal
Lozells Junior and Infant School and Nursery School
Wheeler Street
Lozells
Birmingham
B19 2EJ

Dear Mr Sohal

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Lozells Junior and Infant School and Nursery School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 December 2010 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, the staff, the two co- Chairs of the Governing Body and the local authority representative for their help during the visit.

Since the school's last inspection, there have been some significant changes of personnel. The substantive deputy headteacher stepped down to other duties. Six teaching staff, including the newly appointed deputy headteacher and two support staff have left the school. The headteacher is currently absent. In response to these staffing issues the local authority looked for support from Holte School, a National Support School. On 1 November 2010 the headteacher from Holte, a National Leader in Education, was appointed as executive headteacher. The curriculum deputy from Holte became the acting headteacher of Lozells. This is the second headteacher since the school was given a notice to improve and the sixth headteacher in three years.

Building work is nearing completion to enable Lozells to move to new premises in March 2011 alongside Holte School, an 11–18 secondary school, and Mayfield Special School for profound and multiple learning difficulties. Collaborative working between these schools is well established.

As a result of the inspection on the 27 April 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Inspection evidence, the school's own and external unvalidated data show that pupils' attainment from Years 1 to 6 remains low. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the pupils' learning and progress mean that attainment is not improving fast enough. Nevertheless, the climate for learning has improved since the previous inspection and is supported appropriately by useful classroom displays which reinforce pupils' targets and key learning points. In the lessons observed, pupils showed positive attitudes to learning. Working with the National Support School, targeted support has been provided to strengthen aspects of teaching and there has been some improvement, but not enough to secure higher standards. Teachers are now more confident; lesson planning is generally thorough and activities are purposeful and organised. Pupils have more opportunities to discuss their learning with each other, either in small groups or with a partner. Senior leaders have very recently implemented a more comprehensive tracking system which enables them to monitor the progress made by classes and all groups of pupils as they move through the school. However, the information is not used rigorously enough to provide a secure overview of attainment and progress in all classes or to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. Marking is regular and follows the school's policy but teachers' comments vary in the quality of advice given to pupils on how to improve their work.

School leaders acknowledge several weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Teachers' questioning does not always challenge pupils of differing capability. Too often, teachers step in to provide answers instead of giving pupils more time to resolve a problem themselves. Work is not adequately matched to the differing abilities and understanding of pupils, and all work towards the same objective. Teachers use success criteria to help pupils understand what they need to achieve and pupils generally know their targets, however these often lack precision.

Levels of persistent absence are higher than average but attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with that found nationally. The school has taken strong measures to tackle preconceptions in the community that holidays in term time are acceptable and that lengthy absences around religious festivals are also allowed. Current attendance figures for this academic year are very encouraging and show improvements on last year's figures.

The school is slowly building capacity within the governing body, and senior and middle leaders to sustain and drive improvement. There are very new systems by which the governors and senior leaders support and challenge the staff to improve performance. As yet, leaders are not monitoring the quality of lessons frequently enough to ensure that the intended benefits arising from professional development activities are being implemented successfully into everyday classroom practice. The executive headteacher has a strong vision for the future and a clear understanding of what needs to improve. The two headteachers have swiftly and accurately assessed the true extent of the school's weaknesses. In a short time, they have identified crucial areas for rapid improvement, particularly in teaching and assessment. The school's raising attainment plan was written before the arrival of the new leadership team. Both headteachers recognise rightly that

this plan needs to be revised to include crisp, measurable outcomes for pupils as indicators of the success of the planned actions.

The staffing and leadership of the school have been unstable for most of the time since the last inspection. Although some helpful support to the school has been given by the local authority and some progress has been made, particularly from November 2010, the overall rate of improvement has been too slow. Moreover, the local authority accepts that links between the actions taken to promote improvement have not been clearly articulated and hence are not well understood by staff at different levels throughout the school. Importantly, the local authority's statement of action remains not fit for purpose and had not been amended as requested for this visit. Consequently, leaders have not been able to demonstrate sufficient capacity for sustained improvement against the action plan.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2010.

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science in line with national averages by 2011 through:
 - improving the pace of learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 ensuring consistency of good teaching across the school
 - using assessment information to ensure activities are appropriately matched to pupils' needs
 - analysing the performance of specific groups of pupils to improve outcomes for all
 - sharing good or better teaching across all classes.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels across the school and ensure all contribute to school improvement by:
 - developing the governing body's ability to hold the school to account
 - supporting middle leaders to take increasing responsibility for areas of development
 - holding all staff to account for learning and progress in their classes and areas of responsibility.
- Increase the rate of attendance to in line with or better than the national average and reduce persistent absence by July 2011 by:
 - working with parents and carers to ensure their children attend school every day.