

Preston Support Centre  
Ringway House  
Ringway  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 3HQ

**Direct Tel** 0800 389 5686  
**Direct Fax** 01772 565353/565299

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21 July 2005

Mrs P Ashworth  
Headteacher  
The Foreland School  
Lanthorne Road  
Broadstairs  
Kent  
CT10 3NX

Dear Mrs Ashworth

### **Implementation of The Foreland School's Action Plan**

Following my visit to your school on 4 and 5 July, with my colleague Stephen Long HMI, I write to confirm the findings and to notify you of the outcomes.

As you know, the inspection was part of a policy involving a broader series of visits by HMI and Additional Inspectors to check on the development and improvement of schools which have been designated by their section 10 inspection as having serious weaknesses. You will recall that the focus of the inspection was to assess: the quality of the action plan; the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan and removing the causes of the serious weaknesses.

During the visit we inspected 11 lessons or part lessons; attended a registration period, and an assembly; scrutinised a wide range of documentation provided by the school; and held discussions with you and nominated staff on the areas for improvement identified in the section 10 inspection. We attended inclusion classes in a mainstream school, examined a range of pupils' work and spoke informally with other staff and pupils.

On the basis of the evidence gathered during the visit, we made the following observations to you, the deputy headteacher and representatives from the governing body and from the LEA.

Because most of the pupils have severe special educational needs their standards of attainment are very low and their achievement is also very low. Although the rate of progress is similar overall to that found in comparative special schools, a recent analysis of progress over time indicates that the most able pupils make comparatively less progress than their peers. During the inspection progress in lessons varied but was satisfactory overall.

The quality of education is satisfactory. During the inspection teaching and learning ranged between very good to unsatisfactory but was satisfactory overall. The best lessons were well planned with clear learning intentions which matched the range of the pupils' abilities. Teaching strategies were interactive; consequently the pupils' attention was captured, they were responsive and some showed enthusiasm. Multi-sensory resources were well used. Electronic white boards and other electronic devices motivated the pupils and enhanced their learning. Timings were appropriate and responsive to the pupils' abilities and interest. The pupils' language development was well supported by simple explanation and the effective use of augmented communication. They were supported to make choices and to explicitly meet their individual targets.

In the unsatisfactory lesson and in the weaker aspects of other lessons learning was hindered because of the following features: weaknesses in organisation and planning meant that too little learning was intended and achieved; activities were not well matched to the range of the pupils' abilities; concepts and language were too difficult for the pupils and opportunities for language development and to increase the pupils' participation were missed. In the unsatisfactory lesson the pupils were unable to see or hear properly and the teaching assistants were not well used. Many of the pupils became distracted and by the end the majority of pupils were not engaged.

Appropriate steps have been taken to extend the tracking of the pupils' progress. Teachers moderate assessments to ensure accuracy and subject co-ordinators are developing folders of assessed work to support consistency from year to year. The assessment co-ordinator makes good use of data to set targets and monitor progress annually. Some of the teachers carefully monitor the pupils' progress towards targets on a termly basis but this is not routine practice. Individual education plans have been redesigned to reflect the full range of the pupils' abilities and termly subject goals are mostly good. Many, but not all teachers referred to individual pupil's targets in lesson plans.

The staff are committed to the pupils and work hard to give all of them access to the full curriculum. Some very early drafts of new schemes of work are available although at present they are of inconsistent quality. The pupils who attend mainstream schools are benefiting from improved communication links and explicit expectations. During the inspection the pupils experienced good teaching at the mainstream secondary school where they now access the full curriculum with only minor restrictions. The pupils with complex and severe learning needs in Key Stage 3 were well taught; however one lesson for the whole cohort in Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. The school has begun to split groups on the basis of needs and although this is appropriate managers do not yet ensure that all groups are regularly taught by teachers. Teaching assistants were mostly effective and well deployed to support learning which is an improvement. However there is more to do to ensure all teaching assistants know how to improve the pupils' language development.

The pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Personal, social and health education are appropriately taught via discreet lessons and planned cross curricula opportunities. Many of the pupils showed a social interest in others and lunchtime was a pleasant social occasion.

The school's teaching accommodation remains unsatisfactory. The buildings continue to determine and limit curriculum provision. Classes are taught in spaces which are too small or are unsuitable. Some corridors are cluttered and some of the pupils still take lunch in classrooms. Although a number of minor improvements have been made and the school has entered into a sensible dialogue with the LEA to plan interim measures for the next academic year, these do not address the underlying concerns over the nature of the school's accommodation. The LEA has reviewed the long term options, including rebuilding elements of the school on the current site or a complete rebuild on one of two other sites in the town. As yet no final decision has been made. The school's future is uncertain and planning is behind the agreed schedule.

Following the school's inspection of December 2004, the headteacher and deputy with the support of the LEA, the staff and the governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues. The governors approved the plan, which started to be implemented from the spring term. It is satisfactory with some weakness. The plan addresses the main issues and the proposed actions are well organised and mostly appropriate. However the purpose of some actions is not clear and insufficient time and resources have been allocated to complete some actions. The plan omits an overview of the schedule of work which could help the leadership team to manage the workload and address slippage. The success criteria are clear and suitably ambitious.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have carried out joint lesson observations with the LEA and have begun a systematic programme of further observations. This is beginning to yield an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses. However the cycle of evaluation and planning is not rigorous enough to drive improvements with sufficient urgency. While attempts have been made to regularise aspects of the school's work there are inconsistencies in the different key stages which hinder overall management.

Most co-ordinators have begun to lead regular, focused meetings to develop consistency in planning and to support continuity in the pupils' learning as they move through the school. Some have begun to evaluate the provision for which they are responsible, for example, by observing lessons. However they have not received training in lesson observation or in the analysis of assessment data to identify patterns in the pupils' achievement. This prevents them from taking the initiative in leading their subjects and, as a group they are overly reliant on the deputy headteacher to highlight areas for subject development.

Governance is satisfactory. The governors have begun to receive suitable training from the LEA to enable them to monitor effectively. Minutes and notes of visits demonstrate their commitment and growing ability to focus on the quality of provision. Nevertheless the governors do not have a systematic monitoring schedule or an agreed understanding of developments.

The LEA commentary and action plan are satisfactory. Since the inspection the quality and impact of its support has been satisfactory in respect of the development and implementation of the action plan but it is of concern that support has been slow to resolve the accommodation issues. The school appreciates the support it receives and the LEA wisely recognises that the school will need ongoing help to address aspects of weakness.

### **Action taken to address the areas for improvement**

#### **Key Issue 1: together with the LEA, and as a matter of urgency, radically improve accommodation**

Progress is limited.

#### **Key Issue 2: provide a broad and balanced curriculum which ensures that all pupils including those with PMLD have equal access and can make progress**

Progress is reasonable.

#### **Key Issue 3: improve the achievements of pupils in science, ICT and PSHE in Years 7-11**

Progress is reasonable.

#### **Key Issue 4: effectively monitor and evaluate the school's curriculum, including improving the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum**

Progress is limited.

#### **Key issue 5: ensure that where pupils are to learn alongside their mainstream peers in secondary school, they are fully included in lessons with relevant work appropriately matched to their needs**

Progress is reasonable.

**Key Issue 6, 7 and 8: meet statutory requirements regarding the national curriculum, disability action planning and end of year reports**

Progress is limited in ensuring continuity and progression through the curriculum. It is good in relation to improving access to subjects, meeting the requirement to provide a disability action plan and providing information on attainment in annual reports to parents.

This visit has raised some concerns about the standard of education provided and the school's performance will be monitored.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Strategic Director – Education and Libraries for Kent. This letter will also be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

**TINA HERRING**  
**HM Inspector of Schools**