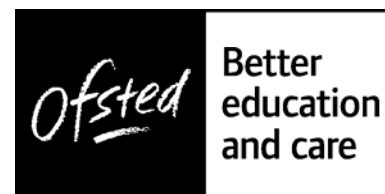


Preston Support Centre  
Ringway House  
Ringway  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 3HQ

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

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20 July 2005

Mr B Gumery  
Headteacher  
Broadmeadow Junior School  
Monyhull Hall Road  
Kings Norton  
Birmingham  
B30 3QJ

Dear Mr Gumery

### **Implementation of Broadmeadow Junior School's Action Plan**

Following my visit to your school on 13 and 14 July 2005, 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 I inspected 11 lessons or part lessons; attended a registration period; scrutinised a wide range of documentation provided by the school; and held discussions with you, the chair of governors, a member of the governing body, a representative of the LEA and nominated staff on the improvements needed. I also examined a range of pupils' work and spoke informally with other staff and pupils.

On the basis of the evidence gathered during the visit, I made the following observations to you, the chair of governors, a representative of the LEA and the deputy headteacher.

The results of the statutory tests in 2004 were below the national average in English and mathematics but close to it in science. However, compared with the results of schools where the pupils had similar prior attainment in Year 2, the school was in the lowest five per cent nationally in all subjects. Value added

measures, for all benchmark groups, suggested that the pupils had made poor progress since Year 2. The trend in results has been below the national trend over recent years. The unvalidated 2005 test results were similar overall to those in 2004 and below the 2004 national average in all three subjects. While the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was in line with the average, that reaching the age expected Level 4 or above was lower than the national figure.

Speaking and listening skills are in line with national expectations throughout the school; most pupils are reasonably articulate, with an adequate vocabulary, and are confident in expressing themselves. Teachers give some opportunities for the pupils to speak at length and explain their ideas but this is not yet built into the curriculum sufficiently. Most of the pupils attend to what others are saying, responding to the points that others have made. Their writing is beginning to benefit from the recent initiatives, but is below the expected standard overall. Most pupils write interestingly and with an adequate vocabulary but their spelling and punctuation are not as well developed and few write rapidly. There is a range of writing for different purposes and audiences but less evidence of extended or sustained writing. Many pupils do not copy words correctly into their books and too little has been done to correct the many spelling and punctuation errors that persist. Much of their work is poorly formed and presented, and many of the Year 6 pupils still do not join their writing consistently. Some teachers do not provide a good enough example in their own handwriting or spelling. The shortcomings in presentation extend to the pupils' work in the foundation subjects.

Standards in reading are closer to the expected level; most pupils read competently with a satisfactory understanding of the text. The school has recently taken steps to improve their skills of inference and deduction, which are presently underdeveloped. The guided reading session observed was a sound experience for all pupils. It was good for those who were taught by adults, and satisfactory for most of those who were reading independently.

Standards in mathematics are below those expected. Many pupils have a reasonable recall of number bonds and place value but there is still a high proportion who make simple errors because their knowledge is not secure. The careless way in which some set out their work has produced further errors. The initiative the school has taken to address the weaknesses in the pupils' multiplication skills is beginning to bear fruit and is reflected in the higher proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level this year. The most able work rapidly and accurately. However, the progress that some pupils have been able to make has been hampered because pupils of all levels of attainment have been set the same work in some classes. Consequently, the most able in the class have completed the work rapidly and with few errors, while the less able have sometimes had difficulty in understanding the new concept being taught.

The pupils' work and the school's own tracking demonstrate that many pupils have made adequate, and a few have made good progress throughout the school in

English and mathematics. However, there is a sizeable proportion of pupils in all year groups who have not met their targets, even though they took the tests on a later date than was the case last year. The samples of pupils' written work, kept over their time in the school, suggest that some made little progress at times.

Of the 11 lessons observed, the teaching was good in two, satisfactory in seven but unsatisfactory in two. Of the lessons in which the teaching was satisfactory, two had a fine balance of strengths and weaknesses. Not all of the teachers were observed, and therefore the proportion of good and unsatisfactory teaching may be unrepresentative. Nevertheless, the balance of strengths and weaknesses seen demonstrates concerns about the progress the pupils are able to make.

When the teaching was more successful, the tasks built securely on the pupils' knowledge and understanding, at the appropriate level for each ability group. The pace was brisk, and high expectations were demonstrated by challenging tasks. The pupils were prepared well for their work, with clear explanations. The teaching was lively, energetic and enthusiastic, with good subject knowledge and encouragement for the pupils to be totally involved. Activities were interesting and were set at suitable levels for the range of attainment in the class.

The teachers planned and prepared their lessons carefully and shared their specific lesson objectives with the pupils, although some were not in language that was easily accessible. A few teachers were beginning to use objectives matched to the pupils' differing needs and levels of attainment but this practice was rare. The objectives and success criteria were usually referred to at the ends of the lessons. However, there were some occasions when the plenary sessions did not build on the pupils' knowledge and understanding well enough. The teachers sometimes used questioning effectively, to probe understanding and to promote thinking and the development of language but many teachers tended to ask only those individuals who volunteered to answer, rather than directing their questioning to involve all the pupils. There was little evidence of differentiated or directed questioning.

The weaknesses in teaching, some of which were displayed in lessons which were satisfactory overall, mainly concerned low expectations, lack of pace and insufficient clarity about what the pupils were to learn. There was, in some cases, too little structure to the lessons to enable the pupils to build on and develop their previous learning and consequently they lost attention and focus. Much of the teaching lacked pace and did not convey sufficiently to the pupils the necessity for making rapid gains in their learning. On some occasions the tasks were not set at the appropriate level for the class or for specific groups. The teachers rarely emphasised the importance of the quality of the finished work and often accepted a lower standard than the pupils were capable of producing, particularly in presentation and speed. Although the day started briskly, time was lost, often significantly, after break-times and when changing over for sets. Teaching assistants were deployed well in the main during activities and they gave good

support to the groups and individuals with whom they worked. However, their time was not always used effectively during the whole-class teaching and plenary sessions, when they were mostly under-occupied.

Assessment for learning is developing satisfactorily. The school has a range of data, from tests and teachers' assessments, and these provide a sound basis for the teachers to plan their work. However, the school is still at an early stage in using ongoing assessment, during and after lessons, as a key tool in informing lesson planning.

Marking is inconsistent. It is secure in English and usually in mathematics but not in science or the foundation subjects. It is often evaluative in English and makes reference to the objectives of the lesson, giving advice for pupils as to how they can improve their work. This is, however, rare in the rest of the curriculum and marking was particularly weak in some work in the foundation subjects. In some cases, the marking is having little impact, with the same errors being repeated. The school has developed its methods for setting targets for the pupils and this is beginning to focus their understanding of how they need to improve their own work. However, the wording and display of targets are inconsistent. Marking rarely refers to the pupils' own targets. The use of self- or peer-evaluation of the pupils' work is beginning to have a significant impact in some classes, although this is also inconsistent.

Considerable extra time is allocated to English and there is an imbalance in timetables, with some subjects receiving a limited time. On some days, it is not until after the afternoon break that pupils experience something other than English or mathematics. There has been no evaluation of the effectiveness of the additional time.

Although there has been some improvement, with the good support of the LEA, there are still weaknesses in leadership and management. The headteacher has a reasonable understanding of the most urgent issues and the way in which they can be tackled. However, there is still a lack of dynamism in the drive for improvement and insufficient use of data and other monitoring information to identify the reasons for the pupils' underachievement. There has been, and still is to a certain extent, a tendency to blame factors other than the teaching for the lack of progress. Where issues concerned with the pupils themselves have been identified, such as their passivity, there are few specific plans to bring about improvements.

The members of the senior management team are enthusiastic and committed, but many are still at an early stage in understanding and carrying out their role, and taking responsibility for moving the school on. They have been supported by the LEA to take a more active part in planning for improvement. Monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' work has been carried out. This has identified some areas where performance is weaker, and support has been given. However, the monitoring has not been rigorous enough, as it does not focus sufficiently on the

impact of the teaching on the pupils' learning or standards attained and on whether they are high enough. The governors have received training and developed their understanding of their role well. They have taken on a greater responsibility for challenging the school and holding it to account.

The action plan is satisfactory overall but has some weaknesses. It is reasonably clear in showing how the school's serious weaknesses will be tackled. The actions for addressing the areas for improvement are suitable, although they are not prioritised sufficiently. The timings show some urgency but are not explicit enough. Methods for monitoring and evaluating are appropriate and most of the success criteria are specific. However, some of the monitoring is to be carried out at a very late date, well into 2006. Evaluations are mostly, but not always, dated. Some of the success criteria are not challenging enough.

Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is good; a clear behaviour policy is applied consistently. The pupils' behaviour was good and often very good around the school and in lessons. They were attentive and obedient in almost all lessons. When the teaching was good, they were totally involved and concentrated well, trying their best and eager to respond throughout. Pupils' attitudes to learning were mainly satisfactory and in the more successful lessons they were good. They usually worked together well and paid careful attention, although concentration slipped when the lesson was not involving. In most lessons, many of the pupils were passive and unwilling to respond to questions. They worked sensibly rather than enthusiastically. There was too little evidence of their developing independent learning skills. Attendance is similar to the national average.

The school's self-evaluation was useful in showing the action that had been taken and the context. This demonstrates that the plan is largely on track, although there have been changes in the school's circumstances which have affected progress. However, the evaluation is not sufficiently clear in analysing the impact that the actions have had in terms of the desired outcomes.

The LEA's support plan is a satisfactory basis for providing support and challenge to the school, although there are some areas for improvement. It identifies the weaknesses in the action plan and demonstrates how the LEA will support the school in rectifying them. There are adequate targets to show that the support has been successful, but these are not dated, reducing their rigour. The plan shows how the LEA will evaluate the effectiveness of its own actions, and who will do so. However, the statement does not contain all of the required information. The actions taken and those proposed by the LEA, such as the support of an advanced skills teacher and the involvement of the school in the Primary Leadership Programme, are entirely appropriate. However, because the publication of the report was delayed, and the school and LEA were not altogether certain of the outcomes, it is too early to see the impact of those actions.

## **Action taken to make the improvements needed**

### **1: Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by ensuring that due account is taken of pupils' standards on entry to school, as measured by their test results at the end of Year 2, when setting their individual targets and planning their lessons**

Given the time since the report was published, progress has been reasonable in putting in place procedures to bring about the required improvements. However, as yet, there is limited evidence that the impact of the actions is raising standards as rapidly as necessary.

In relation to the action plan reasonable progress has been made in planning to address the improvements needed which relate to the school's serious weaknesses, but the evidence of impact is limited. Where there is evidence, it does not indicate rapid improvement.

This visit has raised serious concerns about the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the school, particularly the capacity for self-evaluation, and I am recommending a return visit.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Strategic Director of Learning and Culture for Birmingham. This letter will also be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

**PAT COX**  
**Additional Inspector**

cc: chair of governors  
LEA