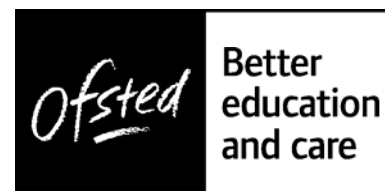


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19 July 2005

Mr A Kershaw
Headteacher
Coleshill CE Primary School
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Dear Mr Kershaw

Implementation of Coleshill CE Primary School's Action Plan

Following my visit to your school on 7 and 8 July 2005, with my colleague Andrew Watters HMI, we 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 where the section 10 inspection indicated that the school was underachieving. You will recall that the aims of the visit were to assess the progress made in addressing and eliminating underachievement and meeting the targets given in the action plan. We also evaluated standards of achievement and the quality of education, especially in relation to areas of underachievement.

During the visit we inspected 11 lessons or part lessons; attended several registration periods two assemblies; scrutinised a wide range of documentation provided by the school; and held discussions with yourself and nominated staff on the causes and areas of underachievement. We also examined a range of the 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, representatives from the governing body and the Local Education Authority (LEA), and a representative from the diocese.

The action plan has been used well as a tool for improvement, although some of the actions planned to increase the achievement levels of the higher attaining pupils have not led to a consistently positive impact in all year groups. The new school development plan for 2005 – 2006 provides a generally satisfactory framework for further improvement and identifies a range of relevant actions for development. Nevertheless there are some important omissions and weaknesses; there are very few measurable and quantifiable success criteria to help the

headteacher and governors evaluate the impact of initiatives, particularly in relation to raising standards in the short and medium term. The three year summary overview does not clearly identify the school's most pressing priorities and the school's aims make very little mention of raising standards and eliminating underachievement.

In the 2005 Key Stage 1 national tests, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of the pupils attaining the expected and higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. At Key Stage 2, there were also improvements in the proportion of the pupils attaining the expected levels; the school exceeded its targets in all subjects. Two thirds of the Year 6 pupils who took the tests in 2005 achieved the higher Level 5 in science, which is above the level expected for their age and represented a 22 per cent increase since the previous year. In English, just over a third of the pupils achieved a Level 5, an increase of eight per cent, and in mathematics, just over a quarter of the Year 6 pupils reached a Level 5, the same as the previous year.

While the school has an increasing amount of assessment information and uses it well to show whether the pupils are making progress or not, there is insufficient focus on the achievements of the higher attaining pupils. Currently the data is not being used well enough to check whether or not the higher attaining pupils are achieving the levels they should do, based on their prior attainment. The school is aware that this is an area for further development. There is a register of gifted and talented pupils although this does not relate sufficiently to their progress and attainment; similarly it is not clear what actions teachers are expected to take as a result of identifying such pupils.

Standards in lessons were satisfactory or better in most lessons. Where they were below national expectations, the pupils were working in lower ability groupings. Standards were good in about a third of the lessons. Progress was good in over half of the lessons but where there were weaknesses in the teaching, progress was less assured. In these classes, there was a tendency to consolidate what the pupils knew already but not enough emphasis on moving the learning on quickly enough.

In English, the pupils made generally good or better progress and standards were at least in line with national expectations. The work was mostly well presented and the pupils benefited from a stronger focus on extended writing. The pupils worked confidently with good quality texts and resources which, in a Year 4 class, created real opportunities to tackle dilemmas and moral problems; they spoke confidently about their work and made appropriate use of technical vocabulary. In Year 2, the pupils worked successfully in matching root words and suffixes; in Year 5 a less able group made good progress in punctuating sentences; and in Year 6 the pupils were competent in writing passive sentences for a particular purpose. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have made worthy gains in achieving the higher Levels 2B and 3 in writing in the national tests.

In mathematics, standards were generally in line with what is expected for the pupils' ages; some of the pupils in Year 6 made good progress and achieved high standards. Nevertheless, in some lessons in Years 1, 3 and 5, a significant proportion of the pupils were capable of achieving more and making faster progress. Pupils in Year 6 achieved well when calculating the answers to algebraic formulae and showed a good understanding of multiplication facts. Some of the Year 5 pupils made less progress when they were required to solve number problems using a written method of calculation instead of finding the answers using mental strategies, which they could do quickly and relatively easily.

The provision at the Foundation Stage in the reception class has been improved since the section 10 inspection and many of the major weaknesses have been tackled. The pupils have made good progress and many have achieved the Early Learning Goals. A good number write independently and have made a sound start in reading and number work. They are taught phonic awareness systematically and several show confidence in reading unfamiliar words. However, in a lesson they had to sit for too long in a formal situation and began to lose interest in the work being presented.

The pupils' personal development is an asset of the school. There is a positive ethos of mutual respect and relationships are very good. The pupils are enthusiastic learners and work very hard in their lessons. They are polite and well mannered and welcome visitors. Their behaviour and attitudes were never less than satisfactory and were mostly good or very good. They were satisfactory in one lesson, good in five and very good in the other five. Attendance at 94.8 per cent is close to the national average and there have been no exclusions in the past year. In a class assembly, statutory requirements were not met; the Key Stage 1 assembly met statutory requirements and provided a good context for celebrating the pupils' achievements and involving the community. The headteacher provided a very good role model for the staff.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. It was satisfactory or better in ten of the 11 lessons; one lesson was very good, five were good, four satisfactory and one unsatisfactory. The quality of the teaching and learning was closely linked. Where the teaching was purposeful, the pupils made steady progress. The pupils were keen learners and sustained good levels of concentration as they completed their work with interest and zeal.

In the best lessons, the teachers had planned activities which made effective use of the pupils' own interests and ideas. They demonstrated good subject knowledge and had high expectations of behaviour and attainment. The lessons were well structured and there was a brisk pace of learning. The teachers were clear and precise in their instructions and explanations. There was effective use of their evaluations of previous lessons to inform the next day's work. The support staff were used well and contributed to the pupils' learning.

In the weaker lessons, including the one that was unsatisfactory, there were over long introductions, poor timekeeping, and the pupils sat for too long on the carpet. The deployment of the teaching assistants was unsatisfactory and they were too passive during introductory sessions. The questions had not been planned to cater for the different needs in the class and there was a weak match of the tasks to the pupils' prior attainment. Occasionally, there was over use of praise to congratulate the pupils or the whole class, when misunderstandings and inaccurate responses were clearly evident. In some lessons, the challenge for the higher attaining pupils was too low or the pace was leisurely. In one class there was tolerance of low level disruption, and the expectations of behaviour were not high enough.

The curriculum has been revised to guarantee that there is appropriate coverage, particularly of the national strategies. The re-organisation of the teaching day ensures that the pupils have their full entitlement and promotes a business-like approach to the curriculum and a good work ethic.

The leadership of the headteacher is good in a number of important aspects and has some very good elements. He has worked with great diligence to improve the provision at the school since he joined it just before its section 10 inspection. He has been successful in creating and building a confident and enthusiastic team with a clear focus on raising standards. This has become a central concern for the staff and governors. He has taken a strong lead in making assessment a tool for learning and improvement and has introduced a range of monitoring and evaluation activities which are becoming embedded in practice. He is enthusiastic, inspiring to the staff, and has forged very good links with the community. The subject leaders in English and mathematics have a clear role in monitoring and evaluation and are building their skills well. The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation are shared with the staff. However, the headteacher's evaluations of teaching and learning are too generous and do not always clearly indicate where there are important areas for development; he gives praise too lavishly. The school has a clear sense of what needs to be done but it has not developed robust systems to measure its success. Its documentation is copious and is not always helpful in setting out clearly the progress made or the evidence base for the actions taken.

The chair of governors gives positive leadership to the governing body; she is determined to ensure that the governors hold the school to account for the standards achieved by the pupils and act as a critical friend. She strongly endorses the headteacher's leadership and school policies. Governors receive regular progress reports from the headteacher and other senior teachers and are increasingly involved in monitoring the school's work; they are committed and enthusiastic.

The LEA has provided relevant levels of support and development; it has made a valuable contribution to the intensive support programme in which the school has been involved. This has had a good impact in improving the knowledge and skills of the staff. Standards have risen at both key stages. The LEA has appropriately overseen the developments to improve the provision at the Foundation Stage. It

conducts regular reviews of the impact of its intensive support programme and, in consultation with the headteacher, is continuing with this programme for the next academic year.

Evaluation of Progress:

The school is making good progress in raising pupils' attainment and eliminating underachievement in relation to the results at the end of the key stage tests. Overall progress is reasonable in raising pupils' attainment and eliminating underachievement across the school, particularly in those year groups where the teaching less successfully promotes good progress.

In relation to the action plan and the impact of the actions taken, reasonable progress has been made in addressing the key tasks which relate to the school's underachievement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of governors, the County Education Officer for Warwickshire, and the Diocese of Birmingham. This letter will also be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

ADELA BAIRD
HM Inspector of Schools

cc chair of governors
LEA
diocese