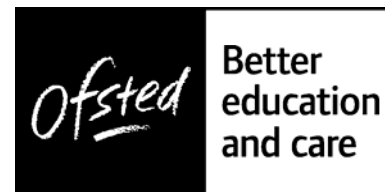


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10 June 2005

Mr M Hickey
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hickey

Implementation of Lawn Primary School's Action Plan

Following the visit of Roger Hartley HMI to your school on 7 and 8 June 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the fourteenth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: 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.

The school has made good progress since the last monitoring inspection and limited progress overall since being subject to special measures.

The school is permitted to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN

Findings of the fourteenth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit five lessons were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior teachers, the chair of governors and a representative from the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, representatives from the governing body, and a representative from the LEA.

Standards of attainment are improving. Although the 2005 national test results for Key Stage 2 have not been received, the teacher-assessed results for Key Stage 1, moderated externally, show that almost all the pupils reached their predicted target level and a significant number exceeded it. Standards in lessons, although unsatisfactory overall, have also shown improvement. Levels of attainment achieved by some pupils, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons, are edging towards what they should be. This cautiously optimistic picture is firmly underpinned by the rate at which the pupils are making progress in their learning. The pace of learning was very good in one lesson, good in three and satisfactory in one. These figures are very encouraging and are at their highest levels since the school was placed in special measures. They are due in large measure to the quality of the teaching, work which challenges the pupils at appropriate levels, and a climate for learning which has had a dramatic effect on the pupils' attitudes and behaviour compared with those at the last monitoring inspection.

The quality of teaching was very good in one lesson; good in two; and satisfactory in two, including one with some good features. The teaching is now much more assured and vital, and reflects the growing confidence of the staff to plan work which is both interesting and relevant and draws on the available assessment data. This is becoming increasingly detailed and accurate in pin-pointing what the pupils do and do not know. The teaching team is still relatively new, but there is a strong commitment to get it right for the pupils who for too long have received a poor standard of education in the school; the staff are now looking forward rather than unhelpfully reflecting on the past. Planning is thorough and consistent. The work is well-matched to the pupils' different learning needs both in the whole-class sessions, when teachers ask questions which pupils of different abilities can answer, and in group work.

In their planning, the teachers are beginning to make connections between different subjects and draw on common themes to practise skills already learned; for example, in the early Foundation Stage class the theme of animals was used to promote aspects of learning in mathematics, creative and physical development and language.

Much of the teaching is enthusiastic and the pupils often rise to the occasion, proving that they are both keen and willing to learn. Overall, the teachers set a brisk pace in the lessons and expectations are generally high. However, on occasions, the wide spread of ages and abilities in the classes, and the intricacies of organising and managing the work, slows the learning down. The classroom environments are bright and well-ordered and there is a good balance between learning aids, such as word lists and number charts, and displays of pupils' work representing different subjects. The teaching assistants continue to give valuable support to the teachers and pupils alike: without their commitment, the school would find it difficult to sustain the current level of improvement.

A major concern over time has been the piecemeal approach to establishing watertight assessment procedures. Since the appointment of the co-ordinator in September 2004 and with specialist support, a new system has been introduced which is beginning to have a positive influence on planning and enables pupils' progress to be tracked over time. Although a detailed evaluation of its overall effectiveness has yet to be made, it is already yielding valuable information about how quickly the pupils make progress towards their target level.

The leadership and management of the school have continued to undergo change. The support of the associate headteacher is no longer required and there is now a fully constituted senior management team. The headteacher is providing effective leadership, particularly in setting the tone for the school, developing relationships at all levels, and boosting morale. He has produced a detailed school development plan and has identified the major aspects of work which still need further development or consolidation; for example, the organisation of the Foundation and Key Stage 1 classes, ensuring the assessment procedures are effective and efficient, and developing further the roles of the co-ordinators. The headteacher has undertaken a programme of lesson monitoring, especially of the recently appointed teachers. A priority for the headteacher has been to organise the management of major responsibilities amongst the staff team. Each co-ordinator has completed a review of their subjects or aspects, although they vary in detail. Co-ordinators have been given time to develop their responsibilities, but some aspects are less well advanced, for example, special educational needs.

The pupils are well behaved, and the calm atmosphere in lessons noted at the last inspection has continued. The pupils respond well to their work and are keen to take part.

Action taken to address the key issues

Progress has been reasonable in addressing the major key issues of leadership and management and the curriculum (Key Issues 1 and 3). Many of the actions taken over the past year are beginning to have a positive impact, particularly on the quality of teaching and learning. Good progress has been made in raising the quality of teaching (Key Issue 2) and in the key issues related to the pupils'

personal development, care of pupils and the partnership with parents (Key Issues 4 – 6).