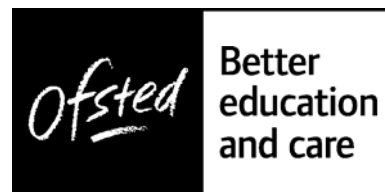


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15 December 2005

Ms J Rogula
Acting Headteacher
Leigh and Bransford Primary School
Hoopers Close
Leigh Sinton
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Dear Ms Rogula

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF LEIGH AND BRANSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 7 and 8 November 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2004.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider, Tribal Education, of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

Evidence

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with you, the deputy headteacher, the chair of governors and representatives from the local authority.

Context

At the end of the summer term 2005 the previous headteacher resigned and will not be returning to the school. Subsequently you were appointed as acting headteacher on a two year contract to lead and manage the school until 31 August 2007. The governors were also successful in recruiting two newly qualified teachers, one on a permanent contract to teach the pupils in Years 5

and 6 and the other on a temporary one year contract to teach the pupils in Year 2.

Achievement and standards

In each key stage the school's results in the 2005 national tests and teachers' assessments were above the national average. At Key Stage 1 all the seven-year-old pupils reached the level expected for their age although very few achieved the higher levels, particularly in writing and science. At Key Stage 2 most pupils achieved the level expected for their age in English and mathematics and all pupils did so in science. The proportion of pupils who achieved above average standards in each subject was high and well above the national figures. Standards are in line with, and sometimes above, the level expected for the pupils' ages and many pupils make good progress. However, despite this very positive picture, the higher attaining pupils are capable of making faster progress and achieving more.

In the Foundation Stage the school's assessment information shows that children achieve very well with many making better than average progress. Most pupils attain good and sometimes very good standards in reading, mathematics and science although they do not achieve as well in writing, where standards are lower than in other subjects. In a Year 5 and 6 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, many pupils achieved satisfactory standards when using a computer software programme to select holidays based on the customer's requirements.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2004:

- accelerate the achievement of pupils, especially in the Foundation Stage, information and communication technology (ICT) and for the higher attaining pupils—satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

The pupils generally behave very well. They are courteous, polite and keen to talk about their tasks. In lessons they try to do their best and most work hard to succeed. They show a real enjoyment for their work when it has a clear purpose and challenges their thinking. On a few occasions the pupils did not settle well enough in lessons and were easily distracted. In an assembly many of the oldest pupils did not set a good enough example to the rest of the school. The pupils' attendance is 94% which is in line with the national average for primary schools.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning ranges from good to satisfactory and is satisfactory overall. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. In the

better lessons the teachers' clear instructions and explanations ensured that the pupils knew what they were required to learn, their frequent intervention reminded the pupils about the purpose of their activity, and imaginative and interesting contexts were used well to motivate the pupils to succeed. Nevertheless there are some important aspects of teaching that are not yet secure. The pupils' tasks are not always matched well to their different starting points and capabilities which sometimes slowed the pace of their learning. This meant that the more able pupils were not challenged enough and the pupils of average and lower ability were not given enough support. As a result some of the pupils' work in lessons was too easy and some was too difficult. Expectations are satisfactory although there were too many occasions when the pupils called out and continued to talk when teachers were instructing the class. This also occurred during an assembly.

The effectiveness of teaching assistants in supporting the pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. It is good when small groups of pupils receive focused support to improve their basic skills. The curriculum is coherent and generally well planned. The range of learning opportunities provided in the Foundation Stage is very good. Day to day assessment is improving and teachers are beginning to make better use of assessment information to inform their future planning.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2004:

- ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is at least good–satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Uncertainties relating to the school's longer term leadership have been removed. You provide determined, positive and thoughtful leadership. The deputy headteacher gives you good support and together you form an effective partnership. There is a clear sense of educational direction. The school development plan provides a good framework for further improvement. Monitoring and self evaluation are satisfactory and the school is developing an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses, for example, through the work of the school monitoring team. The pupils' progress and their achievements are tracked carefully and most pupils are set challenging targets for improvement. The leadership team took effective action to increase the level of additional teaching support for a group of pupils in Year 3 who were underachieving when they were in Year 2. As a result these pupils are making better progress.

The main responsibilities for subject leadership rest with you and the deputy headteacher. While this has undoubtedly improved the quality of curriculum leadership, particularly in English and mathematics, the school's ability to allocate subject responsibilities more equitably is currently not possible because two teachers have only just started their first year in teaching. The school's

programme of intervention, challenge and support is not yet secure or systematic enough. The regular checks on teaching and learning, for example, do not sufficiently reflect the school's main priorities and it is not always clear how important areas for improvement should be followed up.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors' committees have been reviewed and new committees to oversee the school's effectiveness have been established. The governors' timetable for review and monitoring is a very positive development. There are named governors to monitor progress in a number of areas, such as English, mathematics, ICT and the provision for the pupils' personal development. A new clerk to the governors has been recruited and this has helped the governing body meet its statutory requirements. There is one vacancy for a staff governor. The chair of governors has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides astute leadership. Discussions about the school's future staffing structure, its budget allocation and long term stability are underway. This is helping the governors demonstrate their capacity for securing necessary improvements.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2004:

- establish and publish unequivocally the educational direction of the school and ensure all staff and governors are signed up to this—satisfactory progress
- improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels and ensure statutory requirements are met in full—satisfactory progress.

External support

The local authority, through the work of the school's attached adviser and other advisory staff, provides a good level of support. This is appreciated by all teachers. The quality of support provided to improve the school's leadership and management has been particularly effective, for example, helping the acting headteacher produce a constructive and thoughtful self-evaluation of the school's main strengths and weaknesses.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures—satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection—satisfactory.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the work set for the higher attaining pupils is sufficiently challenging in all lessons
- raise expectations to ensure that the school's high aspirations are reflected consistently in all areas of its work
- establish a secure, systematic and robust programme of monitoring, intervention, challenge and support.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Worcestershire.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Watters
Her Majesty's Inspector