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Mrs B Graham
The Headteacher
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Belton Road
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Dear Mrs Graham

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ST ANDREW AND ST FRANCIS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Paul Weston HMI and Trish Walker, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 2 & 3 November 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

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

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

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the standards group, the special needs co-ordinator and teacher responsible for child protection, the chair of governors, and a representative from the LEA. Inspectors also talked with groups of pupils including the school council.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, four new teachers have joined the school. This is fifth of the school's teachers

Achievement and standards

The latest information provided by the LEA for pupils at the end of the Foundation Stage shows that children continue to have less well developed skills than other children who attend the Brent family of schools. These schools are not necessarily neighbouring schools, but those with similar profiles in Brent. In particular, their physical development, their social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and the core skills of calculation, basic reading and writing are below average.

Since the last visit, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have been assessed using national tests. The unvalidated test results show that standards remain too low and are well below average. The school met the target of 65% of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in reading which it set for seven year olds, but did not meet its targets of 67% in writing and 70% in mathematics. It also did not meet the challenging targets which it set for eleven year olds, which included 70% achieving Level 4 and above in English and 66% Level 4 and above in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well below average.

The Local Authority's analysis of pupils' progress by the end of Key Stage 2 shows that just over a third of pupils did not make sufficient progress in English. Just under a half of the pupils who were present in the school in Year 2 made satisfactory progress in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The results also show the declining trend for particular groups, most dramatically for Black British and Black African pupils.

Standards overall were below the expectation for the pupils ages in around half the lessons. A much broader range of subject teaching was observed during this visit. As the visit coincided with Eid and Diwali celebrations, low numbers of pupils were seen in some lessons. While standards seen in art were broadly at expected levels, pupils' work often lacked finish and refinement. In literacy and mathematics lessons, standards were mostly below the levels expected for the pupils' ages. However there were encouraging signs of improvement in pupils' ability to handle number in Year 1 and to recognise initial sounds in reception class. Standards seen in Year 2 and Year 3 numeracy lessons were satisfactory and were close to expectations. Standards seen in music, religious education and information and communication technology were also in line with national expectations. Scrutiny of the pupils work showed that standards in core subjects remain below average.

The pupils made satisfactory progress in around half the lessons and good progress in a quarter. In one in five lessons the pupils' progress was inadequate. During this visit inspectors concentrated on tracking progress to determine whether there was a pattern of pupils making inadequate progress in English and mathematics. This activity was made possible as a result of the substantial work done by the school to develop effective recording systems which track pupils' progress year on year. The "tracker" tool is now yielding important information to help direct further improvement. Inspectors and members of the standards group worked together and identified that a substantial proportion of pupils presently in

Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6 are making insufficient progress in reading writing and mathematics. For example in Year 4, 64% of pupils who were present in the school at the time of their Year 2 tests made insufficient progress in reading and writing. In Year 6, 46% made insufficient progress in writing, 64% in reading and 61% in mathematics. This information is now being acted upon by teachers to inform their lesson planning and teaching.

Good progress has been made in monitoring pupils' progress using the new tracker system. This alone will not raise standards which remain too low and it is now very clear that far too many pupils make inadequate progress.

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

- raise standards of achievement – inadequate progress

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were satisfactory or better in most lessons; they were good in a quarter. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were inadequate in three lessons. This is a less positive picture than at the time of the previous monitoring visit, due to the increased proportion of low level distraction seen in lessons.

Where lessons were interesting, had clear objectives, and engaged the pupils with practical tasks most pupils behaved well and their attitudes to learning were good. In these lessons there was a calm and purposeful working atmosphere. However, some pupils lost their concentration when the pace of the lessons was either too slow or too fast or where introductions were over-long or when they were unclear about what was expected of them. As a result, they fidgeted or talked amongst themselves, not paying appropriate attention to the teacher and not completing their work.

Behaviour in the playground is good and children generally play well together and care for each other. Attendance is improving. Unauthorised absence is much reduced because parents are now informing the school appropriately and seeking authorisation before taking children out of school during term time. However, despite all the school has done, absence remains high due to extended visits overseas by some families. The school has tackled the issue of punctuality by re-organising the timetable, but a number of children still arrive late for the start of the school day. This means that some pupils miss the start of some lessons and other important school activities.

The school takes good account of pupils' views through the school council and pupil questionnaires. Pupils feel that their voice is listened to and that they can play a part in making the school a better place. For example, the school has responded to their suggestions and purchased more play equipment. Pupils report that this occupies them well and prevents misbehaviour.

Until this monitoring visit the school was judged to have made good progress in improving pupils' behaviour. Overall, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are satisfactory, despite an increased proportion of distracted behaviour in a minority of lessons.

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

- Ensure that the misbehaviour of some pupils is not allowed to disrupt the learning of others - satisfactory progress.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Just over a fifth of the lessons seen were judged to be inadequate and just over a quarter were judged to be good. The percentage of lessons that were judged to be inadequate has increased since the last visit and the percentage of good lessons has dropped, with many more lessons being judged to be satisfactory. This means that the teaching is not effective enough to have the strong impact which is needed to raise standards and improve pupils' progress.

Where good teaching was seen, the teachers had clear expectations and challenged their pupils' with the result that they made good progress. Teachers generally have good relationships with pupils and in the better lessons, they managed behaviour well. The school has focussed on improving the quality of teachers' questioning and it is encouraging to see the impact of this is in good lessons. In these lessons, teachers used questioning to encourage pupils to participate and to check their progress. Teachers made good use of small whiteboards and electronic whiteboards to engage pupils in learning and as a result, pupils' confidence to answer questions in lessons has improved.

In less successful lessons, there was a lack of expectation, challenge and pace. In these lessons, the teachers' learning objectives were too imprecise for them or their pupils to measure progress. Where work was not well matched to pupils' needs they became discouraged and their progress was too slow. Ineffective teaching failed to challenge pupils thinking or to inspire them to do well. Teachers were too tolerant of behaviour which distracted others and impeded their progress.

The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Pupils' work is marked regularly and is generally positive in its tone, but it often fails to give them enough advice about how to improve. Marking is not linked to individual pupils' improvement targets with the result that few have a clear idea of their progress.

During this monitoring visit, inspectors examined the quality of the school's care. In particular inspectors looked at the school's provision for vulnerable pupils, and for those for whom English is not their first language. The school is well organised to identify and meet these pupils' needs quickly. Teachers participate fully in drawing up pupils' targets, which are clear and easily checked. Good support is provided by the school for pupils who are not English and for those who are travellers. An inclusion worker provides support for vulnerable children and families throughout the school. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. When asked about the quality of

care, pupils say that they know they are well looked after and they know that there are adults who will help them if they have a problem. They say that bullying is not an issue and most feel safe and happy in school. The recent introduction of 'problem talk' helps children to care and support each other by sharing and resolving problems and issues.

There have been improvements in teaching and learning since the previous inspection but the improvements have not been sufficiently strong or consistent to drive standards and progress forward, fast enough.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning - inadequate progress

Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership and direction for the school. Overall the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory, despite what appears to be an apparent dip in progress since the last visit and a worrying proportion of pupils who do not make adequate progress. This is because progress has been made over time in improving behaviour, ensuring that there are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet pupils' needs, monitoring and supporting teaching, tracking pupils' learning and in governance. There have also been improvements in the quality of the school's care for its pupils.

The leadership accurately judges the quality of teaching to be broadly satisfactory, which is true but it must now recognise that more teaching needs to be good than is currently the case if standards are to rise. The standards group have enabled the school to know exactly how well pupils are progressing, which is a major development for the school. In order for leadership to be judged to be good overall the rate of pupils' progress will need to improve considerably. The leadership recognises that the responsibility for this lies with all staff.

Development planning is now more refined and the Ofsted action plan includes clear strategies with identified impact on standards. Success criteria for improving the quality of teaching are not closely enough aligned to pupils' progress and need to be if the school is to reach the target of 75% of its pupils making expected progress in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6. Planning would also benefit from more precise strategic evaluation which includes governors and the LEA advisory service. Curriculum/subject action plans do not follow a common format and are not tightly enough linked to pupils' learning targets, particularly in English and Science.

The leadership continues to monitor the school's progress, observes teaching regularly, scrutinises work, teachers' marking and performance data. This is important because a fifth of the teachers are new to the school and several are overseas trained.

Governors have made 42 visits to the school since September 2004. It remains the case that some governors are more involved than others and details recorded from

visits are patchy. However overall governance is improving and the Chairman in particular has an accurate view of pupils' progress in school. There is increasing participation by governors in planning and monitoring some curriculum areas.

The leadership of the school has demonstrated that it has impacted on important areas of school life and progress has been made since the initial inspection. It has an accurate view of itself and has put into place all that is necessary for further improvement. It has capacity to make further improvements although in terms of pupils' progress there is a long way to go.

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

- ensure that there are sufficient teaching staff, management and learning support staff to fully meet pupils' needs – good progress
- ensure that the prospectus reports fully on attendance figures and on school and national results – satisfactory progress.

External support

The LEA overall has provided provide good support for the school and continues to focus its work through specialist advice and monitoring of teaching.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate

Priorities for further improvement

Improve the rate of pupils' progress in core subjects by ensuring that:

- teachers' planning and marking is tied to pupils' progress
- specific support and development is provided for teachers whose work is judged to be inadequate
- governors and the Local Authority are routinely involved in evaluating the school's strategies to improve progress.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Brent and Geoff Edwards of the London Diocesan Board.

Yours sincerely

Neil Sortwell
H M Inspector