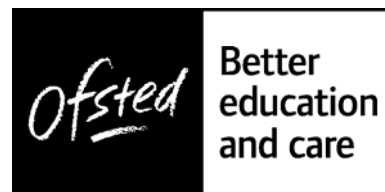


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Mrs Mary Thornton
Headteacher
Greystoke Primary School
Thornton Drive
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4 January 2006

Dear Mrs Thornton

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF GREYSTOKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with John Mitcheson HMI to your school on 13 and 14 December 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 October 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 chair of governors, a local authority education officer, all the members of the senior leadership team, other staff and with pupils. Inspectors also discussed with a random sample of parents their views about the school and their children's progress.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit the senior leadership team has been strengthened and now includes the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and three other team leaders: one for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2; one for Years 3 and 4, and another for Years 5 and 6. Four new teachers

have been appointed and a fifth has returned from maternity leave. These changes in the teaching staff affect half the classes.

Achievement and standards

Standards and progress are good in the Foundation Stage, especially in children's language and literacy and their mathematical development.

Teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in summer 2005 show that standards were average in reading, low in writing and above average in mathematics. Standards were better in 2004. This term pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in writing.

Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in summer 2005 show that standards in English and science were just above average and those in mathematics were higher than average.

This term most of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making good progress in mathematics and higher attaining and average pupils are making good progress in English. The progress of lower attaining pupils of this age is satisfactory. In general, girls are doing slightly better than boys especially in writing.

Standards in Years 3 to 6 in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are often lower than average. This reflects the emphasis the school has given to raising attainment in English, mathematics and science and the teachers' lack of expertise in other subjects. A history of inadequate provision means that standards are low in information and communication technology (ICT) especially amongst older pupils.

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

- raising standards in subjects and ensure that all groups are adequately challenged—satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel they are getting a good education. Their social and moral education is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, at playtime and during the lunch break. Their attitudes to learning have improved and are almost always good. Relationships between pupils are generally good and they are courteous to the adults they meet at school.

Attendance is good. There have been two exclusions since the last monitoring visit.

In lessons and around school pupils work together well and they work safely. Their knowledge and understanding of healthy eating is developing satisfactorily, for example, those who bring sandwiches for lunch tend to avoid foods with a high fat content. School meals, however, do not always provide pupils with good choices of healthy foods. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community mainly through their charitable work. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are improving and so they are suitably prepared to secure their future economic well being.

Pupils' spiritual and cultural education is satisfactory. Religious education (RE) lessons are complemented by daily assemblies and other aspects of spiritual education are taught in other lessons.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved since the last monitoring visit. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that teaching is generally satisfactory. Some is good and occasionally outstanding but there is still too much inadequate teaching.

Teaching of the under fives is good and so is the teaching of literacy and numeracy of those aged seven to eleven. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2 is generally satisfactory. Improvements in teaching and learning in English and mathematics have not had the same impact in other subjects where teaching is less effective. However, one personal, social and health education lesson observed was outstanding.

Lesson planning is generally good. Lessons often include a variety of learning activities with opportunities for pupils to work with one another. In the best lessons pupils enjoy being challenged and get a buzz out of learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively to ensure pupils, especially those who have learning difficulties and disabilities, receive the support they require.

In less effective lessons teachers often spend too much time talking and pupils find the work lacks interest, it is too difficult or is insufficiently challenging.

Teachers set pupils targets but these tend to be the same for those of similar ability and are not specific enough. Marking of pupils' work varies and does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.

Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities has improved and is satisfactory. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and adequate support and care are provided in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Teachers usually plan lessons that include different activities to suit these pupils' needs and target support from teaching assistants to ensure the pupils make satisfactory progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils now have regular ICT lessons and a weekly RE lesson. ICT facilities are still unsatisfactory but the school has plans for further improvement in the near future.

Progress on the areas of improvement identified by the inspection in October 2004:

- improve teaching, curriculum planning and assessment procedures–satisfactory progress
- improve provision for pupils with special educational needs, especially for those with statements–satisfactory progress
- ensure that RE and ICT are taught effectively–satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and improving.

Governors and senior staff have a good grasp of the school's strengths and the headteacher and deputy headteacher know what they need to do to improve and how they will achieve improvement. Arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching are very good, judgements are accurate, and information from the monitoring is used well to identify areas for future training and development.

Governors and senior staff have established good relationships with parents who are engaged successfully in determining the direction of the school.

The senior leadership team has been strengthened with the appointment of the key stage team leaders. They successfully lead the planning of lessons but they are not doing enough to monitor the quality of provision or the progress of pupils. The leadership of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is still unsatisfactory.

Financial management had improved substantially by the time of the last monitoring visit and remains good.

The school is well placed to make further improvement.

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

- improve the financial management of the school–good progress
- develop the leadership of subject co-ordinators in checking standards–satisfactory progress
- develop the leadership, management and governance to ensure all staff are accountable for academic standards–good progress.

External support

The local authority knows the school well and continues to hold it to account whilst it also provides good support, especially for the senior leadership team.

Main Judgements

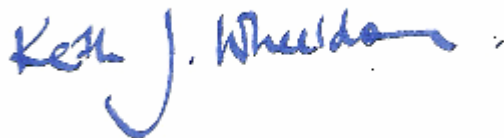
Progress since being subject to special measures and since the last monitoring inspection is satisfactory. The school may now appoint newly qualified teachers.

Priorities for further improvement

- Eliminate the unsatisfactory teaching.
- Ensure that in all subjects the teachers' planning and expectations challenge pupils of all ages and abilities.
- Ensure that key stage team leaders monitor the progress of pupils more closely.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services (designate) for Leicestershire.

Yours sincerely



Keith J Wheeldon
H M Inspector