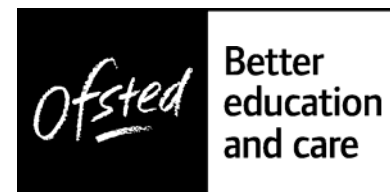


Suite 22 West Lancashire Investment Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale Wn8 9tg

T 01695 556930  
F 01695 729320  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
Ofsted helpline: 08456 404045



14 September 2005

Mr A Blakeley  
The Headteacher  
Hopton Primary School  
Woodend Road  
Lower Hopton  
Mirfield  
West Yorkshire  
WF14 8PR

Dear Mr Blakeley

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HOPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Marie McGuinness, Children's Services Inspector, to your school on 12 and 13 September 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 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, a group of pupils from Year 6, two parents, the chair of governors, four subject leaders and three representatives from the local authority (LA). The inspectors scrutinised a selection of the pupils' work from the summer term of 2004 as well as work on display and in lessons.

## **Context**

The governing body has appointed two experienced teachers to Key Stage 1 following the resignation of one teacher at the end of the summer term and the start of maternity leave for another. It has also appointed an experienced part-time teacher to enable the class of 41 pupils in Year 4 to be taught in two groups for lessons in English and mathematics. To ensure continuity, the pupils in Year 6 will remain with the class teacher who has taught them for the last two terms.

## **Achievement and standards**

The school's results in the 2005 national tests highlight markedly Hopton's success in some areas and need for improvement in others, particularly in dealing with underachievement at Key Stage 2.

As in 2004, nearly all the pupils in Year 2 attained at least Level 2, the level expected for their age. Although there was a slight drop in the proportion of attainment at the higher Level 3 in reading, writing, mathematics and science, the results were good and sustain high standards at Key Stage 1.

There were several successes for the school in the results of the end of Key Stage 2 tests. For the first time, all of the Year 6 pupils attained Level 4 (the level expected for their age) in science and nearly all did so in mathematics and reading. This places the school at the top of the ranking of similar schools in the LA and is a notable achievement. The pupils' attainment was not as good in writing. One in three pupils failed to attain Level 4 because of weaknesses in spelling, organisation and the use of language for effect. Only two pupils did really well for their age, which reduced the impact of the very good scores in reading in the overall results for English. Similarly, in mathematics, a smaller proportion of pupils than expected attained the higher Level 5 and too few pupils shone in mental mathematics. When compared with similar schools in the LA, Hopton comes last in the ranking for high attainment in English and mathematics.

The school's own assessments of the attainment and progress of the pupils in other year groups indicate a mixed picture. While some pupils have done well, a significant minority has not made enough progress. However, there are marked disparities between teacher assessments and the results from tests which call into question the reliability of the data, especially as a basis for setting further targets.

Standards in presentation have improved since the last monitoring inspection. The pupils' work in books and on display was neatly set out. In lessons, many pupils took great care with their handwriting. It is too early to evaluate the impact of the focus on spelling and the introduction of the weekly 'Big Writing Day'. The school's analysis of the pupils' responses in the reading tests highlighted a weakness in the skills of inference and deduction. This was also apparent in lessons in mathematics when Key Stage 2 pupils made thoughtless errors in sequencing numbers and needed prompts to justify the strategy used to solve a problem. In science, work from last term showed a wider range of scientific experiences to promote the

development of investigative skills. Similarly in information and communication technology (ICT), the pupils' work indicated increasing competence in the use of different programs and skills. Pupils in Year 5 drew on their knowledge of the Islamic faith to identify features in pictures and to pose some relevant questions to research.

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

- Improve pupils' achievement and standards in English, science, ICT and religious education - satisfactory progress.

### **Personal development and well-being**

The pupils' markedly positive, mature attitudes and their willingness to learn were again striking. Nursery children, in their first days at school, had settled very quickly and were enjoying the activities. Pupils in Year 6 liked the increased time for sport, drama and music and welcomed the introduction of personal lockers. In all classes, the pupils had helped to draw up rules and codes of behaviour. Class monitors carried out their work sensibly and the pupils were responsive in lessons and keen to be involved. Occasionally, when the pace slowed, some pupils, most often boys, started to fidget and lost concentration.

The participation of the school councillors in the appointment of new teaching staff was a good initiative. There is much scope to draw on the pupils' goodwill, interest and motivation in the running of the school. In contrast to the Foundation Unit and Key Stage 1 classes, the Key Stage 2 classes had few systems to promote the pupils' independence as learners.

### **Quality of provision**

The quality of teaching was good in two of the lessons and satisfactory in ten. The good aspects in many of the satisfactory lessons indicate the potential for the overall quality of teaching and learning to strengthen. They also echo the improvements identified last term by senior staff and representatives from the LA in their monitoring.

At this early stage in the term, the teachers gave an appropriate emphasis to clarifying and reinforcing their expectations of the pupils' attitudes and conduct. The more effective teaching was purposeful, clear, well organised and resourced. The support assistants had been well briefed and all the adults used a range of prompts, questions and examples to develop the pupils' thinking.

There were examples of teachers using all the ways of learning included in the recently compiled teaching and learning policy. Role-play and practical tasks caught the pupils' enthusiasm. Several teachers encouraged the pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner but opportunities were often missed to question the pupils further and extend their reasoning. In some lessons, the teachers' subject

knowledge was too superficial to ensure that the pupils gained a rounded understanding of new concepts and vocabulary.

The curriculum is strengthening in quality and range. In the summer term the pupils learnt much about North American Indian peoples in a week of creative activities. This term, the headteacher and deputy headteacher are drawing on their expertise to lead sessions in physical education, music and drama. Each class has been allocated two sessions in the ICT suite and younger pupils are starting to learn French. The staff in the Foundation Unit showed creative touches in setting out a good range of interesting indoor and outdoor activities. Consistency in the quality and approach to planning the curriculum across the school is developing with the introduction of a common format for subject plans. The school has started to use the LA's agreed syllabus for religious education and to focus on themes in acts of collective worship.

The quality of the learning environment varied and there is little to show a corporate approach to its creation. While some class and public areas were well organised and inviting, others were not. This is not in keeping with the school's new mission statement of 'aiming high and helping to create the future'. Several key documents, records and noticeboards had not been made ready for the new school year.

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

- Improve the extent to which teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities – satisfactory progress.
- Improve the extent to which teaching and the curriculum support the pupils' attitudes to learning and their spiritual development - satisfactory progress.

### **Leadership and management**

The staff, pupils and parents appreciate the headteacher's vision, his willing participation in the life of the school and his openness in discussing school matters through meetings, the newsletter and the parents' forum. In adopting a cautious approach in his first term the headteacher set out his expectations. He is now in a good position to develop the work of the senior managers. Their roles and responsibilities in relation to school management are unclear, especially those of the deputy headteacher. Similarly, it is not clear what is expected of the non-teaching staff. There is limited evidence of corporate endeavour.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have monitored the teaching and supported individuals. They, with the chair of the governing body, have monitored the progress of the action plan. There is slippage in some areas, such as the development of policies, because of the need to start from a lower base than initially expected. The action plans for the subjects give a satisfactory agenda but do not give precise indications of the steps to be taken to raise standards. In some cases, there is little reference to the specific areas for development identified through the analysis of the pupils' performance in tests. The subject leaders do not have the

necessary overview of standards and the pupils' progress throughout the school to enable them to focus on the key points for development. This is not helped by the unreliability of the teachers' assessments of the pupils' attainment.

The governing body is developing its role in holding the school to account. It was quick to question financial statements and projections.

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

- Improve the leadership and management of the school so that key staff and governors have a better understanding of how to bring about school improvement – satisfactory progress.

### **External support**

The regular contact and monitoring by the school contact officer and school improvement officer from the LA has been valuable in supporting and challenging the headteacher and also in the professional development of all the staff. They are aware of the variability in the impact of the work of the subject consultants, especially in English. The mentoring and practical guidance of the advanced skills teaching in science has been particularly influential in raising the confidence of the subject leader to make changes.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- The clarification of roles and responsibilities of the senior managers and support to ensure that they carry them out effectively.
- Training to ensure the teachers assess the pupils' attainment accurately.
- Opportunities for the subject leaders to gain a picture of practice throughout the school in their areas of responsibility.
- The wider use of the expertise and skills of the non-teaching staff.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Lifelong Learning for Kirklees.

Yours sincerely  
Mrs Sonja Øyen  
**H M Inspector**