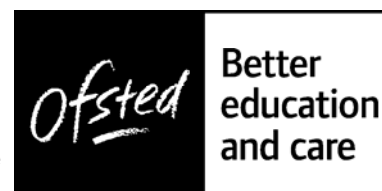


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4 January 2006

Mr Nicholas Hague
The Headteacher
Chisenhale Primary School
Chisenhale Road
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London
E3 5QY

Dear Mr Hague

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CHISENHALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Lyn Riley, Additional Inspector to your school on 7 and 8 December 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 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, spoke to pupils and met with staff, the headteacher, the chair of governors and a representative from the Local Authority (LA).

Context

The school was inspected in October 2002 and judged to have serious weaknesses. Following a Section 10 inspection in October 2004, it was made subject to special measures. The current substantive headteacher took over in September 2005 and is the third since the school was made subject to special measures. Since the last monitoring visit, there have been several other changes in staff including the

appointment of a new Foundation Stage Unit leader and co-ordinator for special educational needs. The deputy headteacher left in October 2005 and the school is in the process of appointing a replacement.

Achievement and standards

Standards in Key Stage 1 remain low, particularly in reading and writing and the more able pupils do not do as well as one might expect. For instance, in the 2005 national tests, none of the pupils attained the higher Level 3 in reading, writing or mathematics. Standards are also low in Key Stage 2, although pupils' attainment improved in the 2005 national tests. Standards were particularly low in mathematics in which the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4, the age-related expectation for 11 year-olds, was significantly lower than the national average. Few pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science.

Despite the low attainment, the 2005 performance data indicated that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science was generally satisfactory. Most groups of pupils within the cohort made broadly similar progress, although the progress of pupils of Bangladeshi origin, who form a significant minority, lagged behind that of their peers. Pupils who have special educational needs made good progress. However, some pupils did not always make the progress expected of them, particularly in mathematics. During the monitoring visit, in most lessons pupils' progress in relation to the learning intentions was at least satisfactory and in many lessons it was good. Pupils' handwriting skills and the presentation of their work remain unsatisfactory.

The school's assessment data indicates that standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are low, particularly at the upper end of Key Stage 2. The school has set realistic targets in ICT for each year group and has begun to monitor pupils' progress towards them. There are currently no established procedures for assessing standards or for monitoring pupils' progress in religious education (RE).

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

- raise pupils' achievement in English, science and RE in Years 3 to 6 and in ICT throughout the school– satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

The school's provision for pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy very positive relationships with their peers and with adults. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good and they display very positive attitudes towards their work. They are consistently polite and work co-operatively in lessons. Pupils move around the school and use resources and equipment in a safe manner. They eat healthily at lunch time and have an adequate amount of exercise in physical education lessons.

The school has successfully focused on improving levels of attendance. Although still slightly below the national average, attendance is now in line with the LA average. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy, along with ICT, are now generally taught well, so pupils are beginning to develop skills that will contribute well to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning and inspectors agree that it has improved since the last monitoring visit. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all the lessons seen. In just over half of these, it was good, including three which were outstanding. In the good lessons, there was a high level of participation and involvement by pupils. These lessons were well structured, and activities were appropriately matched to the needs of all pupils. Teachers used questioning effectively to assess pupils' progress, and to extend and deepen their understanding of concepts. They also used resources including interactive white boards effectively to demonstrate concepts and to maintain the pupils' interest. In one lesson the teaching assistant worked in partnership with the teacher and used drama very effectively to demonstrate a concept to the pupils. This captured pupils' imagination and provoked thoughtful responses. Where lessons were only satisfactory, teachers did not always make the most efficient use of time and resources, and they struggled to achieve an appropriate match between the learning activities and the abilities of all the pupils.

Assessment procedures have improved since the last monitoring visit. In the core subjects and ICT, procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and for tracking their progress are more firmly established. Pupils' progress is reviewed each half term and teachers are beginning to use this information to identify underachievement and set appropriate targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers now know pupils' capabilities better and are becoming more successful at planning activities that are suited to their varying abilities. Teaching plans identify clear learning intentions, key vocabulary, and the precise roles of teaching assistants more consistently. However, the school does not yet have systems for assessing pupils' progress in the foundation subjects.

The school has focussed strongly on improving the quality of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and the newly appointed co-ordinator for special educational needs has made some positive changes. Pupils who have an identified learning need have appropriate individual education plans and the school is beginning to keep clear records of the support provided for each child. The role of teaching assistants has been developed and in lessons they are beginning to provide good support to pupils with language or learning needs.

Plans to improve provision for the more able pupils are at an early stage. Nonetheless, teachers are beginning to support these pupils better during lessons by providing them with more suitable activities and through carefully tailored questioning.

Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and make meaningful contributions to discussions. They are particularly enthusiastic when asked to discuss topics with their 'talk partners' or to offer ideas and opinions to the whole class. In some of the best lessons, pupils demonstrated high levels of independence and the ability to organise their own work and to work collaboratively.

The school curriculum is broad and covers all core and foundation subjects. The current curriculum overview provides a basis for teachers' planning. There are plans to review it in the spring term 2006 and subject leaders have begun to identify relevant links between different subjects in preparation for the review. Provision for RE has improved since the last monitoring visit. Sufficient time is now allocated to the subject and resources have been improved. However, the school does not yet monitor pupils' progress in the subject and statutory requirements are not fully met. The new headteacher has taken over responsibility for this aspect of the school's work and there are plans to review and improve the provision further. The school has introduced a new handwriting policy and, although this is taught and practised in most classes, it is not consistently applied by pupils when producing written work across all subjects.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that the results of assessments are used to help teachers plan effectively for pupils of different ages and capabilities, particularly those with SEN – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

Since taking up his appointment in September 2005, the substantive headteacher has led a vigorous campaign to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Following a number of key actions, including the appointment of new staff and the provision of appropriate professional development opportunities for others, the school has successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning and achieved its target for December 2005. Consequently, although standards are still low, pupils are making better progress and achievement is satisfactory.

Staff in key leadership and management positions now play a more effective role in school improvement. The headteacher has taken the lead on instituting the changes which have brought about improvements to the assessment procedures. Other senior leaders have responsibility for key issues or core subjects. Subject leaders and other co-ordinators lead and manage their areas of responsibility more efficiently and effectively. As a consequence, provision in English, science, ICT and for pupils with special educational needs has improved.

The school has revised the post inspection action plan in the light of the recommendations of the previous monitoring visit and produced updates for each area for improvement. However, most of these plans still do not identify when monitoring activities will be undertaken. The headteacher and senior leadership

team have devised a long-term strategic plan to consolidate the improvements made following the school's anticipated removal from special measures.

Governors have a clear understanding of the issues and challenges facing the school and work effectively with the senior leadership team and local authority to bring about the required improvements. With a permanent headteacher in place, and a strong leadership team, the school's capacity to improve is good.

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

- Improve the leadership and management, including securing the headship, by ensuring that key staff in management positions play an effective role in school improvement – good progress

External support

The LA continues to provide the school with good support financially and in an advisory capacity. LA consultants in particular have been crucial in providing guidance and support to teachers on monitoring standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. The LA review has provided the school with an accurate external view of the quality of its provision and helped the leadership team to identify key targets for improvement. The LA's revised target date for the removal of special measures, which is July 2006, is realistic.

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

- improve pupils' handwriting skills and the presentation of their work
- devise systems for assessing pupils' progress in the foundation subjects and RE
- complete and implement plans to improve provision for the more able pupils

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

Yours sincerely

Florence Olajide
H M Inspector