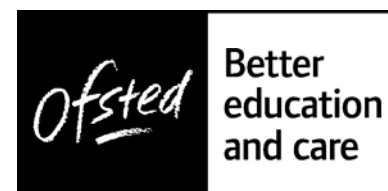


Nord Anglia Inspections
Anglia House
Carrs Road
Cheadle
Stockport SK8 2LA

T 0161 491 4191
F 0161 491 9677

Ofsted helpline
08456 404045



6 April 2006

Mrs S Sanderson
Acting Headteacher
Brookfield School
Fouldrey Avenue
Poulton-le-fylde
Lancashire
FY6 7HE

Dear Mrs Sanderson

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BROOKFIELD SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Wendy Ripley HMI to your school, on 6 April 2006, 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 February 2005.

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 acting headteacher, senior staff, groups of pupils, the vice-chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the governing body has tried unsuccessfully to appoint a substantive headteacher. This is a significant concern for the governors and the local authority. An officer of the local authority has been the acting headteacher since January 2006. There has been a high level of unavoidable staff absence over the last month and the school has experienced difficulties in recruiting sufficient suitable temporary teachers. This has impinged on the smooth running of the school and has resulted, with the agreement of the governors and the local

authority, in Year 10 and Year 11 pupils attending on alternate days. This is an undesirable restriction on these pupils' education.

Achievement and standards

The attainment of pupils in the National Curriculum assessments and in a range of national qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2005 was reported in the last monitoring letter. Attainment overall continues to be below the levels expected for the pupils' ages. However, there is a wide range of attainment within each year group and some pupils attain in line with or even above the expectation for their age group in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Attainment in other subjects is too low. However, the development of practical woodworking skills in design and technology is very good. In the lessons observed the pupils made progress which varied from good to inadequate. Progress was satisfactory or better in eight of the 10 lessons; it was good in five lessons. This represents a significant improvement since the previous monitoring inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. Pupils behave well when lessons are well planned, activities are interesting and teachers have high expectations. They enjoy their work, attitudes to learning are good and they are proud of their achievements. Overall, behaviour is satisfactory, although, the use of foul and abusive language is too frequent both in lessons and around the school. Staff are not consistent in challenging these breaches of the school's code of conduct. Pupils report that they feel safe and know at least one adult within the school that they could approach about any concerns.

Attendance is unsatisfactory. In the first two terms of the year attendance was 77%, which is in line with the figure for the previous year. The school is liaising carefully with the education welfare service and individual parents to address the issue and there have been some notable successes in improving the attendance of individual pupils. However, too many pupils do not attach sufficient importance to regular attendance.

Lessons in personal, health and social education (PHSE), displays around the school and discussions with pupils indicate that the school is raising pupils' awareness of healthy living. In assemblies appropriate attention is paid to social and moral issues and there are opportunities for pupils to reflect on the spiritual aspects of life. Pupils are beginning to play a part in developing the school community through the school council and are offering suggestions for improvement.

Quality of provision

The teaching of the permanent staff is satisfactory overall and the proportion of good teaching has increased. Staff are beginning to systematically evaluate the impact of teaching on learning and to use this to inform planning and target-setting.

This is having a positive impact on teaching and is an important area for further development.

Where teaching is good, staff have high expectations and set appropriate challenges which engage pupils' interest. Lessons are carefully structured and often involve a practical task which pupils enjoy. Pupils know what is expected of them through the clear learning objectives which are shared with them. They respond well, work at a sustained pace and make good progress. Learning objectives are reinforced during and at the end of lessons and there is good use of praise to encourage pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants provide clear advice on what pupils must do to achieve well. Relationships are good and teachers have effective strategies for managing behaviour. Learning support assistants are deployed well and make a significant contribution to the lessons.

There are some weaknesses in the lessons that are satisfactory overall. The tasks are not appropriately matched to the abilities of all the pupils and there is insufficient variety in the activities provided. In this situation the pupils do not fully engage with the work and the pace of learning is not maintained throughout the lesson. The expectations of teachers are not high enough and pupils are not sufficiently challenged to produce work of consistently good quality.

The proportion of inadequate teaching is too high. However, this particularly relates to the difficulties temporary teachers face in managing the behaviour of some pupils. In these lessons, although temporary teachers and learning support assistants make great efforts to engage pupils in the tasks, pupils pay little attention and are disruptive and rude. Teachers find it difficult to teach and they fail to interest pupils in the work. Pupils complete limited work of poor quality and make little progress.

The school provides the full range of National Curriculum subjects, although the provision in technology currently lacks an appropriate balance in the range of materials studied. The planning of the curriculum has improved. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and provide a clearer guide for teachers. There is a particular emphasis on developing emotional literacy through all subjects to meet the needs of the pupils. The programmes of study for physical education and PHSE are much improved. The absence of specialist staff has hindered the development of schemes of work for music, art, and information and communication technology, but these are now in place and further developments are planned. However, some of the schemes of work, for example in history, still do not fully reflect the needs of the pupils and the context of the school. The leadership of the school is aware of this weakness and a systematic process of review and revision is under way. The school is drawing appropriately on the expertise of advisory staff and neighbouring schools, including specialist colleges, to inform these developments.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has been further enhanced with a mini-enterprise course that runs alongside the college-link course and extends the provision for work related learning. There are sound plans to further extend this provision with opportunities for key skills accreditation and an ASDAN course from September 2006.

The school complies with statutory requirements for child protection and has implemented policies to address previously identified weaknesses in the key areas of behaviour management and bullying. An effective anti-bullying policy is in place and a log of instances of bullying is maintained. Pupils appear to be satisfied that the school has addressed their concerns about bullying

The school has reviewed its behaviour policy to clarify the rewards system and to place a greater focus on pupils taking responsibility for their own behaviour. The school is working hard to change the culture from one of control to one where pupils understand that there are choices and consequences concerning their behaviour. Pupils were consulted during the development of the policy, are aware of the changes and support them. However, some pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 4, have found it difficult to adjust to the change in approach. Consequently improvement in behaviour is less evident in Year 11 than in other year groups. The revised policy has resulted in better management of behaviour and greater consistency in the application of rewards and sanctions. However, the policy is not yet fully embedded and the use of strategies to manage behaviour by all staff remains inconsistent.

The use of reasonable force to restrain pupils has reduced significantly but exclusions are far too high, having risen in inverse proportion to the fall in the use of restraint. The school has developed a strategy for reintegration to support excluded pupils on their return to school, providing them with the opportunity to work in a base room and to discuss and reflect upon the issues which led to their exclusion. At times there is a gap between return to school and the provision of the support and this undermines its effectiveness. Pupils value the support and on occasion retreat to the room if they feel vulnerable immediately after having rejoined normal classes.

The analysis of data on the use of reasonable force is comprehensive and provides recommendations for further improvements. However, the analysis of exclusions is insufficiently detailed and does not provide clear recommendations for improvement.

Efforts to involve parents in the education of their children continue and the plans to supply an interim report to parents have been completed. However, the level of detail in these reports is insufficient to allow parents to practically support their children's learning. Parents are now involved in the governing body and express their satisfaction with the provision. Parents are kept regularly informed of school developments and receive all statutory information. The school is responding to parental concerns, for example, in improving the security of the site. There continue to be regular contacts between the school and parents including visits to parents and carers who live at some distance to the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005

- Improving the overall quality of the teaching in all subjects where currently these are unsatisfactory – satisfactory progress

- Ensure that the full National Curriculum is available and improve the quality of the curriculum in all subjects where it is unsatisfactory – satisfactory progress
- Establishing more effective systems to involve parents in the education of their children – satisfactory progress
- Improving the effectiveness of care policies and procedures, the use of restraint and the management of pupils' behaviour – satisfactory progress
- Putting in place suitable measures to tackle pupils' concerns about bullying – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

The senior leadership team, together with the governing body, has evaluated the quality of provision within the school and produced a detailed evaluation which accurately assesses the current position of the school and identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. These are being used to draw up a development plan which will appropriately extend and build on the action plan. The new plan, currently in draft form, has a clear structure but not all of the success criteria are sufficiently precise.

The programme of monitoring and evaluation of provision has been implemented but staffing difficulties have recently limited the level of monitoring and the detail contained within the evaluation records. This is a weakness which the acting head teacher recognises and is addressing. However, a programme of effective support for individual teachers has been delivered and is paying dividends in the improved quality of teaching.

The co-ordination of data to monitor achievement and to inform planning is much improved. There is a clear system for staff to regularly record the attainment of pupils and to highlight their strengths and areas for development in each subject. This effectively informs the development of individual education plans, although the advice from the educational psychologist is yet to be integrated into individual plans. The school now has a clear view of attainment and is able to monitor progress but has yet to establish a system to analyse fully the achievement of pupils.

The role of subject leaders is developing well. There are now clear expectations of their role and this is being monitored through the system for performance management. Individual staff are being effectively supported by external links to develop their curriculum plans. There is a clear published structure for reviewing policies and schemes of work within realistic timescales.

The governing body is effectively organised and fulfilling its statutory duties. The governors are taking an increasingly proactive role in monitoring the school's performance, with individual governors linking to subjects and broader aspects of provision. Governors are well informed and are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- Developing effective systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school – satisfactory progress
- Ensure that key policies are up to date and parents are provided with information they should legally be given – satisfactory progress.

External support

External support for the school is effective. The local authority continues to provide the acting head teacher, who is an officer of the authority. In addition there is good support from the advisory service of the local authority, including the link adviser, in developing schemes of work and improving the quality of teaching and the management of behaviour. The governing body is well supported in personnel and financial management. Support from the educational welfare service and the educational psychology service has improved and there are valued links with the Connexions adviser.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

A newly qualified teacher may be appointed in line with the arrangements agreed with the lead inspector.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to manage the behaviour of all pupils.
- Extend the analysis of performance data to focus on pupils' achievement and establish a clear picture of progress for individuals and groups.
- Review the Key Stage 4 curriculum to establish a broad and relevant curriculum with good access to work-related and vocational education.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education and Cultural Services in Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Garry Jones
H M Inspector