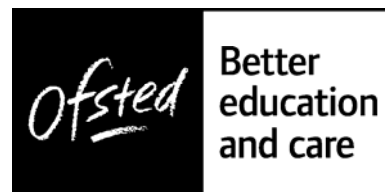


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Mrs Elizabeth Taylor
The Acting Headteacher
Badock's Wood Primary School
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24 April 2006

Dear Mrs Taylor

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BADOCK'S WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school with Russell Jordan HMI and Garth Muton, Additional Inspector on 15 and 16 March 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 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 held discussions with the headteacher, key members of staff, the chair of governors and a local authority school improvement officer. The views of pupils were gathered informally.

Context

An experienced acting headteacher started in September 2005 for this academic year. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2006. The school leadership team has been restructured. The governing body elected a new chair in September 2005. A learning mentor has been appointed to start in April 2006. There are 295 pupils on the school roll and 32 children in the Nursery.

Achievement and standards

When children enter the Nursery their attainment is very low. Their speech and language skills are particularly weak. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception years but this is not sustained throughout the rest of the school. Inconsistencies in the teaching continue to hold back the progress of too many pupils. The poor attendance of some pupils also hampers their learning.

Standards are below those found in similar schools. The school's results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 have been exceptionally low in recent years. The 2005 results in English and mathematics dropped still further. The test results of Year 2 pupils were closer to the national averages with the exception of writing.

The school has evidence that indicates recent, rapid improvement in the standards attained by Year 6 pupils who are now closer to reaching the challenging targets set for them in English and mathematics. There is also evidence of improved progress in mathematics by pupils in other years. However, these improvements are not widespread and achievement continues to be inadequate overall.

Personal development and well-being

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand their targets and feel their teachers give them good advice about how to improve their work. Year 6 pupils value the additional tutoring they receive after school to speed up their progress.

Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to manage behaviour more positively and effectively. This has been successful. Although exclusion rates increased at first, this was as a result of clearer expectations and decisive action being taken. Behaviour overall has improved. There were no incidents of unacceptable behaviour during the inspection. Pupils have a clear understanding of the penalties for unacceptable behaviour and also feel confident that the school deals with bullying effectively. Pupils in Year 6 feel the school council is valuable and are confident in taking issues there for discussion because their views are listened to by the headteacher.

The school has made some progress with its action plan to improve attendance. Absence is followed up by a telephone call on the first day and a learning mentor has been appointed to start at the beginning of next term. Support from the Education Welfare Service in working with the school to improve attendance has not yet been forthcoming. Since the last inspection the number of pupils attending breakfast club has doubled and this has helped to improve punctuality but attendance rates remain unacceptably low.

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

- improve pupils' attendance at school—inadequate progress.

Quality of provision

Out of twelve lesson observations during the inspection, five were judged to be good, five satisfactory and two inadequate. No lessons were observed in the Reception or Nursery classes. There has been some improvement in teachers' ability to engage pupils more in their learning. In the better lessons, teaching was more sharply focused on what pupils were expected to learn. The pace was good and questioning was used effectively to keep pupils on their toes and to extend and assess their learning. In the less effective lessons pupils did not make satisfactory progress, in one case because they were unclear about the task and in another because it was too noisy.

A start has been made in trying to match learning tasks to the capabilities of pupils. Three levels of targets are displayed in classes and pupils know about them. This is improving pupils' awareness of what they are learning. However, teachers are not using these targets consistently as an integral part of their teaching to remind pupils of their expectations. Too often the targets are written in language that is too difficult for the pupils.

Teachers are assessing pupils' progress towards meeting targets and subject leaders are keeping a record. However, there is little evidence that the information is used to plan the next steps for pupils. Whilst the planning of English and mathematics is now more consistent, the aim of planning varying challenges for different abilities has not yet been achieved. The agreed school procedure to record pupils' progress on lesson plans is also inconsistently applied.

Despite agreement on the methods there has been too little progress on improving marking. Teachers are not using marking sufficiently well to help pupils understand the next steps they need to take. Considerable effort has been made by teachers to improve their knowledge of standards by regularly working together to assess pupils' work and compare their assessments. This is improving teachers' ability to check pupils' progress through the levels of the National Curriculum. This knowledge is not yet being widely used by teachers when planning lessons. However, it is being used when all teachers work with individual Year 6 pupils in weekly tutoring sessions. Good practice is emerging from these sessions, particularly with regard to showing pupils how they can improve. This is just one of a number of effective strategies that is boosting achievement in Year 6.

Significant progress has been made in improving the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The help of a number of specialist agencies has been sought and obtained. Training for several members of staff has been arranged and the newly trained personnel now provide effective

lessons for several groups of pupils. These lessons are monitored carefully and the progress of pupils assessed. Improved support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities extends to classroom lessons. Teaching assistants work with the same teachers every day, which enables them to build positive relationships with pupils and provide more effective support.

There is an intention to use curriculum enrichment activities to boost achievement and attendance. There are one or two examples of this beginning to happen by teachers making links between different subjects to encourage pupils to write. Otherwise, little has been done to develop the wider curriculum.

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

- raise pupils' standards and achievement, especially in English and mathematics, by improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum—satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

In a short time the newly appointed acting headteacher has made an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is providing strong leadership and has a clear and systematic action plan for improvement which is regularly reviewed and updated. She is supported by a committed, hard working team of staff and governors who share in her determination to improve learning and drive up standards. She is introducing robust measures to address the school's weaknesses. These are already having a positive effect on pupils' behaviour, the teaching, and leadership at every level. However, the school's overall strategy for assessment and target setting is not sufficiently clear. Some of the agreed actions are not followed through consistently by all staff. There has been little progress in developing the curriculum.

The members of the senior management team are keen to secure improvements in their particular areas of responsibility and collectively they are driving forward the action plan for improvement. However, their leadership skills are wide ranging and they are not yet sufficiently equipped to identify priorities and initiate action independently. Through sharing good practice, training, and with guidance from the headteacher and local authority, their skills are developing but it is too soon for them to have had sufficient impact. Expertise in analysing data, target setting, monitoring and evaluation requires further development to place the school in a stronger position to make continued improvement.

The governing body is keen, supportive of the school's aims, and now has a more realistic understanding of the school's weaknesses and the need for urgent improvement. It realises the need to become more active and effective in holding the school to account. The governing body is benefiting from

working closely with the headteacher and local authority to develop its understanding and skills.

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

- develop the school's capacity to improve by raising the quality of leadership and management at all levels—satisfactory. progress

External support

The local authority's statement of action is good. It is appropriately aligned to the school's action plan for improvement and gives a clear indication of the level of support the school can expect during this academic year and the next. There are explicit outcomes for pupils, clearly defined responsibilities, and appropriate strategies for monitoring and evaluation. Although it contains less detail about the development of subject leaders, this is a strong feature of the Intensifying Support Programme.

The quality of support provided by the local authority is good. A range of specialists is working effectively with the school to address immediate weakness and build its capacity for continuing improvement in the future. There is a productive working partnership between the school and the local authority.

Main Judgements

The school has made satisfactory progress since being subject to special measures.

For the time being, newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Put into place all the intended actions for improving attendance.
- Continue to improve planning and assessment procedures to meet the learning needs of all pupils more effectively.
- Make more effective use of the full range of curriculum opportunities to extend pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy.

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

Yours sincerely

Jill Arnold
H M Inspector