



19 April 2006

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

Dear Mr Hague

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CHISENHALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Sue Rogers AI to your school on 22 and 23 March 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 October 2004.

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Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, spoke to pupils and met with staff, the headteacher, and representatives of the governing body and 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 headteacher took over in September 2005 and is the third since the school was made subject to special measures. Over the last two terms, appointments have been made to several posts

including the Foundation Stage unit leader, special educational needs coordinator, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.

Achievement and standards

Standards throughout the school are still significantly below national expectations. There is, however, evidence of pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 resulting from higher expectations and some improvements in teaching.

Assessment records in the Foundation Stage show that pupils' skills and knowledge on entry to the school are below average. Teachers have set targets for the pupils to bring them up to the expected levels by the time they leave the Reception class. However, the progress of pupils in the Foundation Stage is currently inconsistent because of weaknesses in teaching and planning.

In the rest of the school, work in lessons and in pupils' books shows an improving picture, but progress is still inconsistent across both Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has worked very hard on setting targets for all pupils, which for the most part are suitably challenging. Current assessments and evidence in pupils' books support the school's view that this year's Key Stage 2 test results are likely to show some improvement from last year in mathematics although English and science results are likely to remain the same. Although recently pupils have made good progress in Year 2, Key Stage 1 results are predicted to be lower than last year's in reading and mathematics. This is because of previous inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in this year group. Standards in ICT are variable across year groups. They are very low in Year 6 and, but are progressively better as pupils move through the school.

There has been a concerted effort to improve standards of presentation and handwriting although there are still some classes where presentation is not good enough. Standards in speaking and listening are also improving because of a parallel drive to increase speaking and listening opportunities, such as the use of response partners in lessons.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement in English, science and religious education in Years 3 to 6 and in information and communication technology throughout the school – satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

The schools' provision for pupils' personal development and well being continues to be good overall. Pupils behave well and are responsive, even when teaching is weak or dull. They are keen to talk about the school and their work. They confidently and politely approached inspectors to enquire about the progress their school was making.

Attendance remains below the national average. The school has focussed on improving attendance but has not always promoted it systematically. Attendance data is collected regularly but this is not yet analysed to identify trends or patterns among groups of children.

Quality of provision

Overall, the quality of teaching observed during the visit was inadequate. Although a third of the lessons seen were good, including three that were outstanding, too much of the teaching lacked the quality and dynamism necessary to accelerate progress and raise standards at a faster rate. In the outstanding lessons, teachers had very good subject knowledge and were able to set the learning in context for the pupils. As a result, the lessons were relevant and lively as pupils engaged in purposeful dialogue about their learning. A variety of factors contributed to other lessons being less successful in promoting pupils' learning. For instance, pupils were not always clear about what was expected of them and teaching strategies were not appropriately matched to the learning intention or pupils' needs and abilities. The subject knowledge of some teachers was also weak. In lessons where several of these weaknesses occurred, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory; pupils learnt very little and made limited progress.

Assessment procedures have continued to improve. The school now has reliable data about the current attainment of individual pupils in the core subjects. These are based on assessment carried out at the end of the autumn term. This information has been used to identify and provide additional support for pupils who are underachieving. However, the school is still in the process of collating and analysing recent assessment data and

does not yet have an overview of the progress of all pupils within the last two terms or trends in relation to specific groups of pupils. As a result, apart from those in Years 2 and 6, pupils' progress towards the annual targets is unclear.

Suitable procedures have now been introduced for assessing pupils' progress in the foundation subjects. These are based on level descriptors against which pupils are assessed at the beginning and end of every unit of work.

Planning procedures in Key Stages 1 and 2 have continued to develop resulting in pupils being grouped more precisely by need and ability. The leadership team have continued to provide teachers with support in their planning through the phase group meetings. There are also plans to introduce progress meetings as a forum for supporting teachers with identifying specific strategies for moving individual pupils on in their learning.

Planning in the foundation stage lacks the same level of detail and focus as in the rest of the school. In this phase, learning objectives are not precise enough and planning tends to be heavily focussed on what activities the pupils will engage in rather than what they would learn from them. Consequently, many opportunities for linking aspects of pupils learning are missed. Pupils' self-initiated activities tend to lack focus or purpose because teachers do not sufficiently direct pupils in developing specific skills or knowledge within the context of their play. Planning also lacks cohesion because short term plans are not referenced against the objectives outlined in the half-termly plans. As a result, there is no evidence that teaching actually builds progressively on what pupils already know.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities continue to receive good support in lessons from teaching assistants and through the activities planned by class teachers. Pupils who require additional support as indicated by the assessment data now have access to a range of intervention strategies.

The school has begun to implement plans to improve provision for the more able pupils. It has now established a register of pupils who are gifted and talented across all the year groups. However, provision for these pupils is limited to the activities planned by the class teacher. The school however has plans to develop a wider range of extra-curricular provision.

The school has not yet carried out its plans to review the curriculum and these have been rescheduled for the summer term 2006. Provision for

religious education is satisfactory and the school now follows the recommended syllabus. There are plans to implement the new LA syllabus from September.

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 special educational needs – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

With the recent internal appointments of the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, the school now has a strong senior leadership team who have very good capacity to move the school forward. There are robust procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of the schools actions in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. As a result, the leadership team have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The school has taken rapid action to ensure that there are appropriate systems to assess and track pupils' progress in all subjects. This data is used effectively to target additional resources at pupils who are underachieving. However, the school is not systematic enough in collating data into aggregates in order to form an overview of standards within and across groups of pupils. The senior leadership team provide staff with good support and appropriate professional development opportunities. The governing body also continues to provide the school with good support.

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

Support from the LA remains good. The LA has conducted regular reviews of the quality of teaching and learning and has an accurate view of what the priorities for improvement are. LA consultants have continued to provide support for individual teachers where this is needed.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of provision in the foundation stage by ensuring that planning focuses on what pupils need to learn.
- Ensure that assessment data is analysed effectively in order to gain an overview of whole school trends and patterns of attainment.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils experience teaching, which is consistently good or better.

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

Yours sincerely

Florence Olajide
H M Inspector