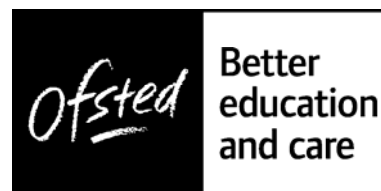


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Mrs Barbara McGuire
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6 March 2006

Dear Mrs McGuire

SERIOUS WEAKNESSES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF FOURLANESEND COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 1 and 2 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 was found to have serious weaknesses in June 2005.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of receipt of this letter.

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, subject leaders for English, mathematics and science, the leader for assessment, teachers and groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

There is a Reception class and three other classes, each with two year groups. The present acting headteacher started in September 2005. The permanent headteacher joins the school after Easter. One teacher remains on long term leave due to ill health. The deputy headteacher will be leaving at the end of term. There is now a full time teacher in the Year 5/6 class. Additional learning support assistants (LSAs) have been appointed to support the teaching of English and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Standards and progress in mathematics and science were the focus of this visit. In 2005, by the age of seven all pupils attained the standards expected nationally in mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2, test results in 2005 showed standards to be lower in mathematics and science than in English. Progress made from the end of Key Stage 1 was below average in mathematics and extremely low in science. Few of the higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reached the levels expected by the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science. Children in the Foundation Stage made satisfactory progress and most met the expected levels.

From the school's evidence and findings of the inspector, in science and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 standards are now at least satisfactory and are good for the higher attaining pupils. Progress is good in both key stages. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making outstanding progress in mathematics and science, showing an extremely fast pace of improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and other vulnerable children also receive excellent support, which helps them to make good progress. Children start school achieving a lower level than expected in communication, language and literacy, with limited skills and experience in early writing. However, they make good progress in all areas of their learning. The levels children attained in sessions observed in the Foundation Stage were good.

The excellent system for setting targets, based on accurate assessments, enables all pupils to understand what they have to learn and how they can do even better. Progress is very carefully monitored to identify what pupils do well and where they need to improve. The school is extremely effective in identifying what pupils have missed in their learning and in ensuring that these areas are now covered.

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

- to raise standards in mathematics and science by improving the achievement of pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, through ensuring full coverage of all aspects of these subjects—outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

The attitudes of pupils to school and to their work are extremely positive. Behaviour is good and there have been no exclusions. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils enjoy learning and say that their targets 'always give them something to aim for' and that they are 'chuffed' when they meet them. They are good at following instructions and have a clear understanding of the school rules. Pupils have a good sense of safety and are respectful and caring of each others' needs. They make a good contribution to the life of the school, particularly through the school council. Year 6 pupils take on responsibility for 'wake and shake' sessions at the start of the day as well as leading playtime games. The recent training on circus skills, aimed to help pupils' coordination and self-esteem, enabled a group to provide an exciting performance for the Reception class. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and this was discussed fully at the school council. The school nurse works closely with staff supporting sex education for the older

pupils and other health issues. Pupils move sensibly around the school and outside, taking care not to hurt each other. They raised money for victims of the earthquake in Kashmir. Pupils believe strongly that school prepares them for their future lives through learning basic skills, the use of information and communication technology, and by helping them to make links between subjects.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching is good overall with some outstanding features. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Planning is thorough with a clear structure. It carefully identifies what all pupils should learn, with a range of challenges to suit the higher attainers and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers know what they have to teach and present it in a way which suits the ages and abilities of their pupils. In outstanding lessons, the pace of learning is fast and expectations of success are extremely high. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils develop their skills in English through other subjects. For example, speaking and listening are emphasised very effectively in all lessons as well as writing. Teachers work very effectively with LSAs and volunteers to help pupils do their best. LSAs provide outstanding support and guidance for different groups including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Where necessary, pupils have clear and well focused individual education plans.

Excellent analyses are made of national test information and outcomes of regular assessments throughout the year. Staff make very good use of questioning to assess learning and to provide further challenges especially for the higher attaining pupils. Marking is often outstanding. Pupils are given detailed feedback on their achievements and are expected to make an evaluation of their own progress. Older pupils are developing excellent skills in assessing their own work against their targets. The very effective use of assessment information results in accurate and appropriate targets for classes, groups and individuals.

Classrooms and shared areas of the school are attractive and lively places which encourage pupils to learn and celebrate their achievements. There are sufficient resources and teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively and with confidence. This motivates pupils and encourages them to participate fully.

The range of subjects covered in the planning is broad and balanced and ensures all pupils can access what they should be learning. The school is aware of the need for the Foundation Stage children to have their own outdoor space and has advanced plans in hand for this provision. Pupils use computers and the internet with confidence to carry out research and to publish their work. The school makes good use of educational visits and residential experience in Key Stage 2 to enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are confident about knowing who to go to if they are worried or upset. Child protection procedures are in place and further training for staff is planned. Through detailed feedback from staff, pupils of all

abilities are given excellent guidance on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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

- to improve the use of assessment to ensure pupils understand what they should do to improve and to help plan future learning to effectively meet the needs of all pupils—outstanding progress

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good with many outstanding features. The acting headteacher and the senior staff know the school well and have been successful in putting systems in place to bring about improvement. The school's action plan is thorough and has clearly measurable targets for raising standards and moving the school forward. The whole school team has been extremely effective in dealing with the issues raised in the last report. Subject leaders in English, mathematics and science provide extremely good leadership and management. There is excellent monitoring of teaching and learning using careful scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work as well as analyses of assessments and observations of lessons. The headteacher also provides exceptional support and guidance for staff to help them do their best. Her feedback is very constructive and helps teachers to understand how they can improve further. The leadership and management of support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are good, including the deployment of the highly skilled LSAs. Governors are fully committed to school improvement. They are very supportive and visit the school to observe lessons in their designated subject areas. The governing body is now at full strength and making sound progress in helping the school improve. With many new governors, there is a continuing need for further training.

The considerable focus on school improvement and the robust systems put in place by the acting headteacher and subject leaders are proving very successful. Teaching and assessment are now consistent and pupils are taught what they should know. Gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly in Years 5 and 6, have been identified through accurate assessment and are now being filled extremely well. There is a good induction programme planned to support the new headteacher. However, the school and the local authority recognise the need to plan carefully for the handover of the deputy head's responsibilities when he leaves at Easter. The school has made outstanding progress since the last inspection and, although changes in senior staffing are imminent, there is a good capacity to improve.

External support

The local authority has provided good support for school improvement through consultants, advanced skills teachers and advisers. It has provided additional funding to give teachers time to develop their skills and expertise. This funding has also released the headteacher from a class teaching responsibility, giving her time to focus on moving the school forward. The support provided has meant the school has been able to improve at a fast pace. The LA's statement of action is good. It builds

effectively on the last inspection report and complements the school's action plan well.

Main Judgements

The school has made outstanding progress in removing the causes of its serious weaknesses.

Priorities for further improvement

- The local authority should maintain this regular and direct support for the governors and the new headteacher through the transition period.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Children's Services for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wheeler
H M Inspector