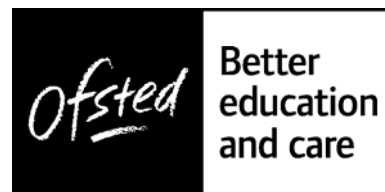


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Mrs S Harries  
Acting Headteacher  
Nonsuch Primary School  
Wood Leasow  
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West Midlands

2 February 2006

Dear Mrs Harries

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF NONSUCH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with John English, Additional Inspector, to your school on 12 and 13 January 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 July 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 11 lessons, attended an act of collective worship, scrutinised a range of documents, and met with the acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the senior management team, the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority (LA). Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and pupils. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the LA link adviser and the chair of governors.

### **Context**

The school was placed in special measures following its section 10 inspection in July 2005. The headteacher and a class teacher left at the end of the summer term 2005. The LA arranged for an acting headteacher to be

seconded to the school for a term to lead on improvements. As the post of headteacher was advertised only recently the acting headteacher has agreed to stay at the school until the end of the spring term. To develop her leadership and management skills the deputy headteacher was released from her class commitment in September to work alongside the acting headteacher. The newly qualified teacher (NQT) has a temporary contract until April 2006. The Foundation Stage teacher is currently absent and her class is being covered by a temporary teacher. Another teacher is planning to take maternity leave at the end of January and, to ensure continuity for the pupils, a supply teacher has been employed from the start of the spring term to work alongside her.

### **Achievement and standards**

Standards of attainment are below average at both key stages. The results of the national 2005 tests show that standards at Key Stages 1 and 2 have fallen still further in all core subjects. At Key Stage 2 the school's results show that its pupils made far less progress than those in other schools and their high level of underachievement.

Inspection findings and the school's own assessment data confirm that significant numbers of pupils are underachieving in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Recent assessments by teachers indicate that the school is unlikely to reach its targets for English and mathematics in the 2006 Key Stage 2 national tests. The school has recently set new, more realistic targets and believes that, although challenging, they will be reached as a result of well focused, good quality teaching. A system for tracking individual pupils' progress has been introduced but is still in the early stages of development. It has yet to have an impact on raising standards and achievement.

### **Personal development and well-being**

The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. During the inspection pupils gave every indication of enjoying learning. They contributed well to lessons and showed a clear understanding of classroom routines. They worked together well in pairs or larger groups to support each other's learning. Most pupils behaved sensibly in the corridors between lessons and in the playground. Pupils appreciate and enjoy activities at lunchtime and in the clubs and visits outside school hours. Attendance has improved. Last term it rose to 93.8%, which is just below the target set by the LA. Punctuality in the morning has also improved due to measures taken by the school to highlight the issue and target continual latecomers. In an assembly on the second day of the inspection only a small number were late. The majority of pupils enjoy school and feel safe and secure. However, some report rough behaviour and bullying and are reluctant to report incidents for fear of reprisals. Others are unhappy with new, healthier eating arrangements. Although pupils accept and

appreciate many of the benefits of improved behaviour and other recent changes in school routines, there remains an undercurrent of dissatisfaction amongst a significant group of pupils which indicates that the school has yet to achieve a lasting change of attitude.

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

- raise standards and improve behaviour by seeking ways to combat unsatisfactory punctuality and increase pupils' attendance rate—satisfactory progress.

### **Quality of provision**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons seen were fairly evenly spread between satisfactory and good. One outstanding lesson was seen. A notable feature was the consistency of practice in many lessons which has a positive impact on learning by establishing clear expectations and enabling routines to operate effectively with minimal organisation. For example, pupils learn to move quickly from talking in pairs to careful listening to each other and the teacher as they share learning in the subsequent whole class session. Relationships with the pupils are good and in most lessons there is a calm atmosphere conducive to learning. There is good support from learning assistants. Teachers use a common format for planning which ensures that differentiated tasks are provided to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The many pupils with learning needs are given effective support and make satisfactory progress. In some lessons insufficient attention is given to checking that learning matches teaching. For example, in some lessons pupils were set to work on individual tasks when they had not understood the concepts involved. This meant that they wasted time whilst waiting for help.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Activities outside of lessons, including those informal ones organised in the playground at lunchtime, clubs after school and visits out of school provide good enhancement opportunities. The school has begun to identify and plan for cross-curricular links in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). This is at an early stage of development. During the inspection there were missed opportunities to use basic skills in English and mathematics across the curriculum. For example, in a design lesson there was no planning for some obvious links with numeracy. The lack of ICT equipment and the absence of the ICT subject leader have delayed planned developments.

Care, guidance and support are good. Management of behaviour is consistent throughout the school and the work of the learning mentor is a major positive resource in tackling the problems of vulnerable and disruptive children. The personal welfare and care for the pupils are good and there are effective contributions from the non teaching staff who are well led and trained. Guidance to pupils on how to improve their standard of work is improving as

the school develops systems for tracking the progress of pupils. But, involvement of the pupils in their own learning through self-assessment and target setting is still at an early stage.

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

- raise standards and improve behaviour by improving the quality of teaching and learning opportunities—satisfactory progress
- raise standards and improve behaviour by ensuring that all pupils' needs are met effectively—satisfactory progress
- raise standards and improve behaviour by ensuring that English, maths and ICT are taught through, and used in, other subjects—inadequate progress.

### **Leadership and management**

Since the inspection in July 2005 the acting headteacher has provided the necessary strategic leadership. She has taken a number of appropriate actions to improve the quality of education, including the introduction of an effective whole school approach to the management of behaviour. The revision of the behaviour policy, school rules, rewards and sanctions, together with the introduction of clear systems and routines, have resulted in a significant improvement in pupils' behaviour.

The school's post-Ofsted action plan addresses all the areas for development from the inspection report. The proposed actions are carefully mapped out providing a clear, detailed plan of action. The implementation of this plan has been carefully evaluated and supported by regular monitoring. The acting headteacher's self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and perceptive. It has been significant in informing and clarifying future developments for both the senior leadership team and the governing body.

All staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The acting headteacher's leadership has had a significant impact as she has encouraged and supported staff to work together with renewed vision and enthusiasm. There is a strong team spirit and sense of accountability with regard to raising standards. The new senior staff team meet regularly and actions and decisions are suitably recorded. The school recognises that the senior team need further training and coaching in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning with a particular focus on learning outcomes.

In the past, the governing body has not received sufficiently clear information about the standards pupils reach or the progress they make as they move through the school. The governors still have only a basic understanding of the data presented to them at governing body meetings. Their lack of experience in using such information hinders their contribution as critical friends of the school.

The data missing from the annual report to parents (no longer a statutory requirement) has been satisfactorily communicated to the parents by letter. Information on the accessibility plan has also been made available to parents on request.

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

- raise standards and improve behaviour by ensuring that school leaders devise a clear plan of action that focuses on how to improve provision and raise standards—satisfactory progress
- meet statutory requirements by including the national comparative test data and the school's accessibility plan in the governing body's annual report to parents—satisfactory progress. Therefore, this issue does not need to be inspected in subsequent visits.

### **External support**

The LA's statement of action is satisfactory. It identifies the extra support to be provided. However, at the start of the inspection the school had not received the LA's commentary on its post-Ofsted action plan. This indicates a lack of effective communication with the school. Since September 2005 the school has had a change of link adviser who has made only one visit to the school. This took place early in December. Therefore, the school has not received the extra support from the link adviser identified in the LA's action plan. It is also regrettable that there has been a significant delay in the recruitment of a new headteacher. The advertisement appeared in the educational press on the second day of the inspection.

The LA has provided some specific support for the school, including the secondment of an experienced headteacher, the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), staff and governor training and funding for consultant support to develop a robust system for meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The LA has provided the school with additional funding to meet the cost of implementing the post-Ofsted action plan. Consequently, despite its deficit budget, the school has been able to employ an additional teacher to allow the deputy headteacher to be released for on the job training in leadership and management. The school has also been able to install interactive whiteboards in every classroom and order a new ICT suite.

Given the level of underachievement in literacy and mathematics in both Key Stage 1 and 2 and the decline in science standards at Key Stage 2, there is a strong case to be made for increased support from the LA to support the development of good quality teaching and learning in the core subjects.

## **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures–satisfactory.

Quality of LA's statement of action–satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

The priorities remain those identified in the inspection of July 2005. With regard to these, the school's specific priorities are to:

- appoint a substantive headteacher as soon as possible
- increase the proportion of good teaching
- provide opportunities for the senior leadership team to monitor and evaluate the quality of pupils' learning
- consider how to address pupils' low self-esteem and negative attitudes to school
- ensure that basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught across the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Learning and Culture for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Linda Rockey  
**H M Inspector**