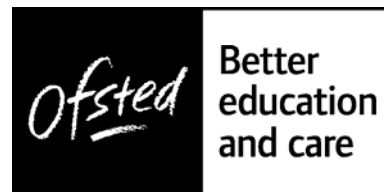


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21 March 2006

Mrs H Hollick
Headteacher
Redbourn Infant and Nursery School
Long Cutt
Redbourn
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Hertfordshire AL3 7EX

Dear Mrs Hollick

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF REDBOURN INFANTS' AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 2 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 January 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

I observed 7 lessons, scrutinised a range of documents and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the subject leader for information communication technology (ICT), the vice chair of governors, a representative from the LEA. I also spoke to pupils in lessons.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit there have been several changes in staffing. The inclusion manager has taken up the substantive post. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed and will take up her post in April 2006. Pupils in the second reception class started in January 2006.

Achievement and standards

Standards in 2005 rose in writing and mathematics with a significant proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in these areas as well as in reading. Standards in lessons also show improvement. More able pupils, particularly in Year 2, receive work that is more challenging which results in them making better progress in their learning. However, this is not yet consistent across the school and in a small minority of lessons, the work provided for the more able pupils remains insufficiently challenging.

The introduction of a more creative approach to learning is having a positive impact on pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Systems to track the progress that pupils make have been greatly improved and are beginning to be used effectively to identify the learning needs of all pupils and monitor more accurately the progress they make.

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

- raise standards of achievement generally and ensure that the needs of the gifted, talented and more capable pupils are met through a more creative approach to the curriculum – satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development is good. They like school and enjoy lessons. Behaviour is very good and pupils are caring and considerate towards each other. They cooperate well with each other in lessons and the playground. They listen eagerly to the teachers and each other, answering questions and suggesting ideas enthusiastically. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development which has a positive impact on their personal development. Pupils are encouraged to keep safe and know who to go to if they are unhappy or have a problem. They learn about healthy lifestyles and the importance of healthy eating. The need to take regular exercise is reinforced through daily outdoor play sessions for children in the foundation stage and regular physical education lessons for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Through the school council, pupils contribute positively to making the school an even better place.

The new arrangements for settling pupils into school were successfully implemented in September and more recently for the January intake into the reception class. Parents' views on the new arrangements have been canvassed and are being analysed to determine whether further improvements to the process need to be made. The nursery environment is now very stimulating and welcoming providing a very good range of indoor and outside activities that cover all the areas of learning. The care and welfare of children in the foundation stage is good.

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

- reconsider arrangements for settling pupils into school and rectify the unwelcome nursery environment – good progress
- address the shortcomings in the care and welfare in the Foundation Stage – good progress

Quality of provision

Although teaching remains satisfactory overall, it ranges in quality from good to satisfactory with a greater proportion of good teaching than was seen during the previous visit. In the effective lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide work that is suitably challenging and builds on what they have learned before. As a result, pupils enjoy the activities and achieve well. Lessons are less successful when the work planned does not ensure that all pupils' needs are met and pupils are not given sufficient support to help them complete the task. This results in some pupils becoming disengaged and losing interest in their learning. In some lessons, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop and think through the answers to teachers' questions. Lesson planning is detailed and thorough and the quality of assessment information has greatly improved enabling teachers to begin to track the progress made by pupils much more accurately. Teaching assistants, in the lessons seen, provided good support to children who required additional help enabling them to achieve well.

Resources for ICT have recently been updated and are now good. Teachers are developing their confidence and skills in using the new equipment effectively to improve pupils' learning. All pupils now have access to computers, electronic directional toys and digital still and movie cameras and their use is beginning to support learning across all aspects of the curriculum.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly by raising expectations and making better use of the information the teachers gather on the pupils from the assessments they make - satisfactory progress
- address the shortcomings in information and communication technology (ICT) – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

Good progress continues to be made in improving the leadership and management of the school. Systems for monitoring and evaluating how well the school is doing are now effective and the headteacher's self-evaluation accurately reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The role of the deputy headteacher is now more fully developed with a greater level of responsibility and accountability. The deputy headteacher has overseen the successful introduction of a more effective tracking system to monitor pupils' achievement. Teachers are now able to identify

more readily those pupils who are under-achieving and as a result provide appropriate support to help them improve their learning. The appointment of the inclusion manager has added to the expertise of the senior management team which is now fully in place. Governors provide an appropriate level of challenge to the school and are provided with regular reports and information to enable them to become much more involved in monitoring aspects of the school's work.

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

- take action to rectify the significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the headteacher and develop the role of the deputy headteacher - good progress

External support

The local authority has continued to provide a good level of support that has helped the school to improve the educational provision for all pupils. Support from advisory teachers for ICT and the foundation stage has enabled subject leaders to develop their knowledge and skills within these areas and become more confident in leading within their subject areas. The attached school's education adviser continues to provide regular effective support to improve teaching and learning and she has worked closely with the headteacher to develop effective self evaluation processes.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed

Priorities for further improvement

The priorities remain those identified in the inspection of January 2005.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Pupils, Schools and Families for Hertfordshire.

Yours sincerely

Juliet Winstanley
H M Inspector