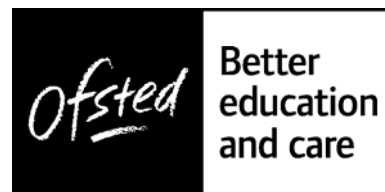


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Mrs E Stead
The Headteacher
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1 March 2006

Dear Mrs Stead

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF MEASHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 22 February 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2004.

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 the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, other key staff, a group of pupils and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Two new teachers joined the permanent staff at the start of the spring term. They will take on the roles of numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) coordinators. A third teacher joined on a two term temporary contract.

Achievement and standards

The pupils' achievement and standards in the 2005 National Curriculum tests were reported in the previous monitoring letter.

Since the last monitoring visit the school has appointed new subject leaders in numeracy and ICT. Changes to other roles and responsibilities have strengthened the management of science and literacy. The quality of teaching and learning is improving. Considerable staff development has enabled the school to establish systems to give an accurate view of standards, track the pupils' progress, identify underachievement and target appropriate support. This work is in the early stages and combined with recent improvements in the quality of teaching has the potential to raise standards from a very low base, although the impact is not yet evident in the pupils' work.

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

- to raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by the end of Year 6—inadequate progress.

Personal development and well-being

Staff have adopted a more consistent approach to behaviour management in lessons and around the school. New staff have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and the vast majority of pupils respond well. Classrooms and corridors are calmer environments in which to work and learn than was the case six months ago. A small number of pupils have short attention spans and teachers and support staff work hard to keep them on track. A handful of pupils who present very challenging behaviour can cause disruption to the learning of other pupils. Pupils' report that the move from open plan teaching spaces to separate classrooms has improved their concentration as their learning is no longer disrupted by background noise from other lessons.

Despite the school's continued efforts, attendance rates remain stubbornly below average at 93%. A small number of parents choose to take their children on holiday in term time. This is not helpful to the school.

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

- to improve the attitudes and behaviour of pupils throughout the school—satisfactory progress.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen on this visit. The new staff have strengthened the school's provision. A greater focus on the pupils' learning has helped teachers understand more clearly what they need to do to enable pupils to make good progress.

However, the proportion of lessons in which pupils make at least good progress is not high enough to raise standards rapidly.

Across the school the approach to lesson planning is consistent. Teachers are better at matching activities to the pupils' needs. This is crucial in the mixed age, mixed ability teaching groups. The most significant improvement has been the very recent work in training staff to accurately assess the standard of pupils' work and to use assessment information to track progress.

Substantial improvements have been made in relation to the ICT curriculum. A more structured timetabled allows pupils greater access to the ICT suite and all classrooms in the main school building have been equipped with interactive whiteboards and data projectors. Staff have received appropriate training and more is planned as part of their continuing professional development. A new member of staff appointed in February will take the lead on developing this learning resource further. Pupils report they are excited by this new development and say they are enjoying helping their teachers get to grips with the new technology!

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

- to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school—good progress
- to improve the organisation and management of the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils—satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides very good leadership and has given the school a clear strategic direction. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's development plan has well considered priorities through which to build on recent successes. The staff are united in a team approach which has improved the ethos of the school.

The senior leadership team has been effective in providing the support and direction which has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the use of assessment. The latter is still in the early stages and it is too soon to gauge the impact of this work on raising standards. Recent appointments have given coherence to the management structure. All staff are now accountable for meeting agreed targets in the context of a framework of clearly understood roles and responsibilities.

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

- to establish an effective management team—good progress.

External support

The LA continues to work in partnership with the school to provide a range of well targeted support from consultants, advisors and lead practitioners. Training has also been provided for the governors. Links with a local college have been helpful in developing practical activities to support the delivery of Key Stage 2 science, and design and technology. A number of staff with management responsibilities have been given the opportunity to access professional development courses.

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

- Increase the rate of progress pupils make in English, mathematics, science and ICT lessons.
- Under the new curriculum leadership, develop action plans to raise standards in the core subjects.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for Leicestershire and the Diocese of Leicester.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Kirby
H M Inspector