



5 June 2006

Mr B Carson
The Acting Headteacher
Olivers Battery School
Austen Avenue
Olivers Battery
Winchester
SO22 4HP

Dear Mr Carson

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF OLIVERS BATTERY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Susan Rogers AI and Michael Pipes AI to your school on 16 and 17 May 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 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 the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, the headteacher designate, the deputy headteacher, core subject leaders, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), a group of pupils, the chair of governors, a group of parents and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the last monitoring visit the school has experienced another change of leadership, staff illness and the sudden bereavement of the caretaker. The current acting headteacher is working closely with the new headteacher designate and the deputy headteacher. This is to ensure that the change in leadership, school systems and standards is as smooth a transition as

possible. The LA continues to remain committed to the school's drive to improve and provide it with support where it is needed.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are good for more able pupils. Standards are above average in English. They are average in mathematics and science but pupils are capable of higher standards than this to match their English standards. Pupils are now making good progress in the majority of lessons and at least satisfactory progress in all the lessons observed. This is better than it was at the last inspection but the same as it was at the last monitoring visit. The few pupils with English as an additional language do well at the school.

Progress is now good in the core subjects and information and communication technology (ICT) as there has been a clearer implementation of the medium-term plans to ensure that the lower and middle achieving pupils are now doing better. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities progress well from their starting points.

The school recognises that there is still more to do to improve achievement overall. Teachers are not making enough use of the wealth of data they now have available to them to improve their lesson planning and set work according to the needs of the pupils.

In a science lesson, for example, pupils became chatty and off task after having completed work quickly, and well, and within the time limits set for them. However, pupils were not given an opportunity for a full discussion at the end of the lesson to share their ideas and explore how their investigations could be improved.

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

- ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities achieve their potential - satisfactory progress
- raise standards in science throughout the school, and in writing in Key Stage 1 and information and communication technology in Key Stage 2 - satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

Pupils say that there has been a big improvement in behaviour this year and this was seen in good pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils listen well in lessons, are enthusiastic and engaged and have the confidence to challenge the teachers politely and courteously.

Pupils enjoy school and know what a healthy diet is but they raised concerns about behaviour at lunchtimes. They say that supervision is not always adequate and that organisation of activities on the field could be better. Otherwise, pupils say they feel safe in school and agree that resolution of any bullying incidents has also improved.

Quality of provision

The school is now making satisfactory provision, overall, for the education of its pupils. There is a significant level of good teaching in all areas of the school and as a result pupils are making better progress. There has been a marked improvement in the analysis of needs and support for the pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The needs of the middle and lower attaining pupils are now being met increasingly effectively. There are clear and useful individual education plans for the pupils where additional support is identified. The teaching assistants are working effectively giving general help in class and specific support for named pupils.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and continues to be enhanced by a good range of other activities. The school is improving the range and quality of the resources available to the teachers and the pupils. The range and quality of assessment is improving and much useful data is collected. However, the setting of class and individual targets is not yet fully integrated into planning. A recent review of teaching groups, restoring class-teaching rather than setting by ability in some years, has not yet been analysed for effectiveness. There is some very good marking and constructive feedback to the pupils, for example, in science books, but the overall standard and frequency of marking is inconsistent.

The child protection procedures are now satisfactory. There is an updated policy and all adults have received training. Overall, the provision for the care, guidance and support of the pupils is satisfactory and improving. There is good awareness of health and safety issues, including how to manage any incidences of boisterous behaviour or bullying. The pupils are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning, and the overall curriculum provision in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 – satisfactory progress

- ensure that child protection procedures are in place and that they are understood by all staff – good progress

Leadership and management

There has been difficulty in maintaining continuity in school leadership because of the number of changes of headteacher over the last year. The current acting headteacher has made a very good impact and has quickly gained a very good working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He is clear about the priorities for improvement and is building well on the good work begun by the previous two acting headteachers. However it is not explicit enough in the school action plan how success will be measured, and how procedures for monitoring will be carried out.

The school currently has a deficit budget and is implementing an appropriate long-term recovery plan. The governing body are well informed about the school's strengths and weakness. However, there is a lack of clarity about how they can best support the school and provide challenge through their own systems of monitoring and evaluation.

There are now good communications with staff and parents and a consultative approach to school improvement. The new behaviour management policy has been ratified with parents. The school has taken steps to consult parents on improvements, a process which is to be continued during the summer term.

Members of staff have continued to receive appropriate training and performance management is being re-established by the current acting headteacher. The co-ordination of provision for learning difficulties and disabilities as well as pupils for who English is an additional language is well managed by the co-ordinator.

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

- address the weaknesses in the leadership of the headteacher, and in the overall leadership and management of the school – satisfactory progress
- ensure that the behaviour management policy is agreed with staff, parents and pupils so that it is consistently implemented – satisfactory progress

External support

External support is satisfactory overall. There has been good support through the turbulent times and the changes to the school leadership and staff illnesses. The school has greatly benefited from good leadership from

experienced acting headteachers and the LA has helped the school appoint a new permanent headteacher for the autumn term. Support for the governors in how they can check on the school's progress, help set strategic steps for improvement and monitor the progress it has made, is less secure. There is still no self- evaluation of the school's performance in order to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed provided the school can continue to maintain the high quality support it currently offers.

Priorities for further improvement

- establish clear roles and responsibilities for senior managers,
- provide guidance and support to governors so they can effectively challenge the school and monitor the progress it is making.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Linda Kelsey
H M Inspector