



4 July 2006

Mr Jon Abbey  
The Headteacher  
Bush Hill Park Primary School  
Main Avenue  
Enfield  
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Dear Mr Abbey

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BUSH HILL PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Mary Summers, Additional Inspector, and Graham Warner, Additional Inspector, to your school on 28 and 29 June 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 April 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 headteacher and other staff, pupils, the chair of governors and representatives of the local authority (LA).

### **Context**

Staffing has remained reasonably stable since the last monitoring visit. The Nursery teacher returned from a period of sick leave at the start of the summer term. The Foundation Stage has a temporary phase leader as the substantive leader remains on maternity leave.

## **Achievement and standards**

Standards, although still below average, are improving. Early indications are that national test results for 11 year olds are better in 2006 than they were in 2005, especially as more pupils are reaching higher levels. The better progress in lessons identified in the last monitoring inspection has continued partly because the thorough assessment tracking system helps raise teachers' expectations. Most pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) make satisfactory progress. However, pupils at an early stage of English acquisition make slower progress as they find it difficult to understand what is expected of them. A significant number have difficulties fully joining in lessons and too many miss out taking national tests.

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

- Raise standards and achievement appreciably throughout the school – satisfactory progress.

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

Pupils continue to respond positively to their lessons. They listen carefully to adults and each other, making thoughtful contributions to discussions. Behaviour is good. Pupils play harmoniously and safely in the playground. The daily 'Active 15' sessions from Reception to Year 6 continue to ensure that pupils are physically active at the right time in the school day.

Senior leaders continue to work fruitfully at improving attendance and punctuality rates, which show sustained increases over the current school year. Punctuality is monitored rigorously with records being carefully kept. Joint action is taken by the assistant headteacher and education welfare officer (EWO) to make certain that this is continually improving. They work as a well-informed team.

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

- Increase the levels of attendance and punctuality – continuing good progress.

## Quality of provision

The significant improvements seen in teaching at the last monitoring inspection have levelled out somewhat. However, there is continuing steady progress and the teaching remains satisfactory overall, except in the Nursery where it is still inadequate. Many lessons have a clear purpose and structure which help pupils build on previous learning. Teaching often challenges pupils and helps them learn at a suitable pace. In most lessons, behaviour management is positive, contributing to a calm and pleasant atmosphere. Assessment procedures are now well-established and provide an accurate picture of how well each pupil is doing. Teachers include 'must, could and should' statements in their lesson plans which help clarify expectations for different groups of pupils. This process needs further refinement, however, so that it takes more account of the assessment data. This could particularly help higher attaining pupils. These children receive suitably challenging work fairly regularly, but too often this is not so. This hinders their achievement. Less effective lessons are often dominated by teachers and provide too few opportunities for pupils' practical engagement. This is particularly the case in Years 1 and 2 when pupils are kept too long on the carpet, losing their concentration and becoming restless.

Pupils with learning difficulties are usually supported effectively in lessons. However, pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are still not catered for successfully. There has been no improvement of note. This is a long-standing and grievous failure which means that some particularly vulnerable pupils leave the school without the skills they need. Although EAL pupils are assessed appropriately on entry, this information is not used to plan effective interventions. Provision for these pupils is not effectively mapped. Support given by specialist and class-based staff does not target specific individual needs sufficiently and therefore does not extend pupils' English skills at a rapid enough rate. Provision is hindered further by teachers' limited strategies to plan and present lessons which engage these pupils. EAL pupils whose English skills are good enough to enable them to join in lessons benefit from the improvements in teaching as much as other pupils. However, those who cannot do this often get left behind.

The curriculum continues to be reviewed and developed to ensure that it provides interesting and stimulating experiences for most pupils. Productive

links have been established with local secondary schools, providing opportunities for pupils to develop dance and drama skills, for example. The wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes well to the development of good social skills and healthy lifestyles. School leaders have a clear agenda for curriculum development, including the need to extend provision for information and communication technology and have developed useful links with the City Learning Centre to support this.

The curriculum in Reception has undergone much improvement over the last year. It is appropriate and consistently planned, leading to satisfactory teaching. The picture in the Nursery is much less positive. Whilst some developments have occurred since the last monitoring visit, for instance in the daily structure and variety of activities, the provision remains inadequate. Daily and weekly planning is still thin. Learning intentions are unclear, leading to a lack of focus and challenge in the activities. Some helpful procedures have been introduced to track pupils' progress against nationally expected outcomes but the ongoing assessment of children's learning is poor. The activities provided do not take account of children's various stages of learning or of their specific needs, especially those for whom English is an additional language. Opportunities to work together and extend concentration span are too limited. Pupils play happily but most adults do not do enough to model language and extend their understanding, through questioning or focused discussion.

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

- Take urgent action to improve the quality of teaching and assessment of children's needs – satisfactory progress.
- Make better provision for all groups of children – inadequate progress.
- Put in place rigorous and consistent assessment procedures that identify the needs of all children precisely and track their achievements carefully – good progress.
- Provide a more meaningful, relevant and motivating curriculum that promotes higher standards for all children – satisfactory progress overall but still inadequate in the nursery.
- Improve the provision in the Foundation Stage – inadequate progress overall because the severe weaknesses in the Nursery identified in the original inspection and in every monitoring visit still persist. However, progress in the reception classes remains satisfactory

## Leadership and management

The headteacher continues to lead the school, with its complex issues, well. He hits consistently the right balance between listening and directing; setting clear expectations whilst being sensitive to the staff and how fast it is possible for them to change and improve their practice. He receives good support from the deputy and assistant heads, both of whom have clear remits and continue to grow in their roles. Some necessary hard decisions have been taken. As a result, the work of the school has continued to improve in many areas and standards have begun to rise. In most aspects, school self-evaluation remains accurate and very rigorous, with clear conclusions drawn. This has enabled the drafting of a mainly good new school improvement plan which is well structured and targeted and indicates that, in most areas, the school is well placed to continue its improvement.

However, the Nursery and the provision for EAL pupils across the school continue to be very weakly led and managed without much sign of improvement. This detracts significantly from the progress the school is making elsewhere. Just as in the last monitoring letter, there is not a clear strategic view of the needs of EAL pupils (especially those at an early stage of English acquisition) and therefore how resources can be best deployed to meet them. The impact of some staff training in strategies to help EAL pupils is too small. The role of the EAL co-ordinator is underdeveloped and does not contribute enough to the development of staff and the learning of the pupils. In the Nursery, the necessary radical changes have not begun. The aspects of the draft school improvement plan related to the Nursery and EAL are much weaker than the other sections and do not indicate a strong capacity to improve. There is a lack of clear success criteria, related to pupil outcomes, and of timed, structured actions to improve provision.

Most phase leaders continue to improve their work. They understand their roles and support and guide their colleagues helpfully. However, the acting leader for the Foundation Stage tends to focus on the detail rather than improving the big picture. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities continues to improve, as does curriculum subject leadership. However, few curriculum leaders are in a position to evaluate standards in their subject. The governing body continues to function competently, and with a great sense of care for the school, though it has been too quick to accept reports that improvements have taken place in the Nursery and EAL.

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

- Improve significantly the overall leadership, management and governance of the school – satisfactory progress overall; however, progress is inadequate in the management of the Nursery and of provision for EAL pupils.

### **External support**

The LA continues to provide good support in many respects. In particular, the link adviser is a very good critical friend. The Intensifying Support Programme consultants have had a good impact. The LA assists the school well in developing its self-evaluation and the capacity of many staff to contribute effectively to this.

However, the previous monitoring letter said that support for the Foundation Stage needed to be 'urgently reviewed' and that the school needed better help to improve provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. The LA has not responded effectively to either need, which has contributed significantly to the grave lack of progress. The headteacher rightly feels that, in these aspects, the LA has not provided enough support, and that, in the case of EAL, it does not set clear enough expectations or hold the school to account adequately. In the Nursery, the LA's evaluation of progress is far too rosy, judging success principally by actions taken rather than by their impact. This is not typical of the LA's evaluation of other aspects of the school's work which is much more robust.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.  
Standards and teaching continue to improve for the majority of pupils.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.  
Provision in the Nursery and for pupils for whom English is an additional language has not improved.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed, except in the Foundation Stage.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve very urgently the quality of provision in the Nursery
- Improve the provision for pupils who have English as an additional language, so that they develop more quickly the language skills needed to gain full access to the curriculum

These two priorities were also identified in the last monitoring letter.

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

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton  
**HM Inspector**