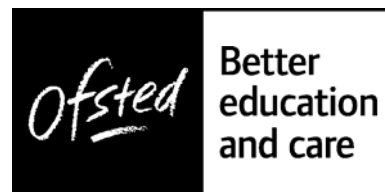


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Mrs Elizabeth Taylor
The Acting Headteacher
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29 June 2006

Dear Mrs Taylor

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BADOCKS WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Garth Muton, Additional Inspector, to your school on 21 and 22 June 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 October 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 held discussions with the acting headteacher, key members of staff, three governors and the local authority link school improvement officer. The views of pupils were gathered informally and through a short meeting. It was not possible to observe teaching in Year 6 as these pupils were on a residential trip.

Context

A substantive headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2006 to succeed the acting headteacher. Six teachers have resigned with effect from

the end of term six and arrangements are underway to recruit replacements. The school aims to have recruited two assistant headteachers by January 2007 as part of a new management structure. There are 286 pupils on the school roll and 32 children in the Nursery.

Achievement and standards

The school's assessments indicate a picture of variable improvement in pupils' achievement across the school ranging from good to inadequate. The rate of pupils' progress is faster in some years than in others and more improvement is noted in mathematics than in English, where writing remains a concern. Improved tracking systems are helping the school to identify which pupils are not making satisfactory progress and where to target additional support.

More pupils are closer to reaching the standards expected for their ages than at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The outcomes for pupils in the Year 6 national tests for 2006 are expected to show a dramatic improvement on the previous year. However, the achievement of significant groups of pupils remains inadequate, notably in Year 2, where the test results are likely to be lower than in 2005, and in Year 4. Inconsistent teaching has hampered the progress of these pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Standards of behaviour have continued to improve. The school is much calmer than it used to be. Pupils behave sensibly moving around the school and in assemblies. Pupils feel safer than they used to. They are confident that incidents of threatening behaviour will be sorted out quickly by the staff. Pupils are very aware of the consequences if they misbehave. Year 5 pupils have been trained as peer mediators and younger pupils comment positively about their success in sorting out minor squabbles on the playground. Pupils behave well in most lessons. There are lapses in this general positive picture on occasions as a result of inconsistencies in teacher expectations.

Although there were no serious incidents during the inspection, there is a very small minority of pupils who presents extremely challenging behaviour. A number of strategies are being used successfully to deal with these pupils including the appointment of a learning mentor to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result of these interventions, the sanction of exclusion is being used less frequently.

Considerable effort has been committed to improving attendance. Reward systems have been simplified and are now more meaningful to pupils. First day absences are checked routinely. The education welfare officer is working with the families of pupils with the worst attendance records. The learning mentor is positively encouraging the attendance of a specific group of pupils. The breakfast club is flourishing and having a positive impact on attendance as well as encouraging communication between the school and parents.

Attendance is monitored regularly by senior staff and the school secretary. As a result of all this effort attendance is steadily improving. The school is aware of the need to maintain its focus on improving attendance as it remains too low.

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

- improve pupils' attendance at school – satisfactory.

Quality of provision

The overall quality of teaching remains satisfactory, although some aspects have improved since the last monitoring inspection. Although there are some examples of good teaching which could usefully be shared, there are still inconsistencies between classes which hamper pupils' progress. A small proportion of teaching remains inadequate due to low expectations and unsuitable tasks. This leads to off task behaviour and lack of progress by pupils.

Planning has improved with the help of an agreed format. There is a gradual improvement in the effort to match classroom activities to pupils' different abilities. Assessment is being used more effectively to check up on the progress pupils are making and to plan lessons. New systems have been developed so that teachers are very aware of the level of attainment of their pupils. This information is being used with some older pupils to improve their own awareness of the progress they are making and expected to make. Classroom targets have been improved. They are worded in child-friendly language and based upon an analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Some pupils are very aware of their targets because teachers routinely remind them. In common with all school initiatives there are inconsistencies. Some teachers use the information they have about pupils more effectively than others. A great deal of effort has gone into establishing a new data base of pupils' attainment but this has not yet been used to its full effect to track the progress of groups of pupils or to identify trends in achievement.

Although teachers' marking has improved, its development has been limited to work in English and its quality varies between classes. The best examples specify how pupils should improve their work, but some of the comments are too general. Not all teachers provide sufficient time for pupils to follow up their guidance and make the necessary amendments to improve their work. There is too much variance in the quality of spelling, handwriting and presentation across the school, due to inconsistencies in teachers' expectations and approaches. Too many teachers are not providing good models or experiences for their pupils to develop the required skills successfully. These aspects of teaching require improvement across the school so that all pupils receive appropriate guidance to help them achieve their best.

Some short term modifications to the curriculum have been made but much remains to be done. The emphasis for terms 5 and 6 has been to identify stimulating opportunities to improve pupils' writing. Teachers are using visits, visitors and other enrichment experiences to encourage pupils to write. This is a positive development but school policy requires further clarification before it contributes effectively to raising standards. Expectations for different year groups are not sufficiently clear about the writing process, the quality of writing including presentation, and the different purposes of writing. There is insufficient emphasis in the planned curriculum upon developing pupils' spoken language and vocabulary. Many pupils start school with restricted language skills and the curriculum is not yet designed specifically to meet the needs of its pupils by making language development integral to all learning experiences. The scheme of work for personal, social and health education is having a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and emotional development. However, the precise content and teaching approaches for sensitive aspects such as sex and relationships and drugs education require further clarification.

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

- raise pupils' standards and achievement, especially in English and mathematics, by improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has continued to provide tenacious leadership which has effectively focused the school on raising standards and helped to develop the skills and confidence of the leadership team. The school now understands how to analyse and use data effectively to identify where pupils are not making satisfactory progress and which areas of teaching to target for improvement. This is beginning to have an impact on improving standards across the school. The new tracking system introduced by the leadership team is improving teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. The special educational needs coordinator has made a good contribution to improving provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The governing body is gradually increasing its awareness of its role and is starting to raise more challenging questions about how the school's work affects pupils' progress.

Teachers' planning and use of assessment are improving, which is helping pupils to make better progress. The management of behaviour has improved considerably during the course of the school year, although there are lapses when teaching is less secure. The efforts to improve attendance are having a positive impact and the school is successfully harnessing the support of parents and outside agencies.

Although the school has made satisfactory improvement since it became subject to special measures, there is still a way to go before standards have

improved to an acceptable level. Systems for monitoring initiatives and tracking pupils' progress are in place but there is no overall framework for school self-evaluation that is shared and understood by staff and governors to assist them in building the school's capacity for further improvement.

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

- develop the school's capacity to improve by raising the quality of leadership and management at all levels – satisfactory.

External support

The Intensifying Support Programme has assisted the leadership team in developing their skills in using data more effectively and taking action to address weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. The provision of local authority consultants has been particularly helpful to the school in improving teaching, particularly of mathematics lessons. Close monitoring and support by the school improvement officer have been effective.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

The school may appoint no more than two newly qualified teachers as part of its recruitment strategy for the academic year 2006–07, subject to the provision of suitable induction and support arrangements.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve opportunities to develop pupils' spoken language skills.
- Clarify expectations about the teaching of writing across the school, including handwriting, spelling and presentation.
- Establish a clear framework for school self-evaluation.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children and Young People's Services for the City of Bristol.

Yours sincerely

Jill Arnold
H M Inspector