



22 June 2006

Mrs. Sue Garland-Grimes
Kelford School
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S61 2NU

Dear Mrs Sue Garland-Grimes

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION KELFORD SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on the 22 and 23 of June, 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

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the associate headteacher, the acting headteacher designate, all members of the leadership team, two local authority (LA) representatives and the chair of the governing body.

Context

The associate headteacher continues to lead the school. The school improvement adviser, who has been working closely with the associate headteacher, has been appointed as acting headteacher from September 2006. The building programme is in its second stage. Accommodation for

secondary aged pupils has been substantially improved: the focus is now on the foundation and primary departments.

Achievement and standards

The school has compiled comprehensive progress data for individual pupils in English and mathematics. Senior leaders know clearly what reasonable and good progress should be in these areas for their pupils. This is an important issue for a school of this type. The progress data is used effectively in some, but not all, classes to monitor the progress of pupils over time. The expectation to incorporate performance levels in all medium and short term planning is contributing to raised achievements for many pupils. Moderation systems to ensure consistency across the school are beginning. This will be an area of further development in the near future.

The substantial work undertaken to ensure assessment for learning forms part of all teaching and planning is also beginning to have a positive impact on pupil's achievement. However, the important use of formative assessment is not yet consistently part of the teaching and learning process across the school. The assessment coordinator monitors this aspect of the school's work well, knows what needs to be done and has appropriate strategies in place to remedy the weaknesses. An effective action plan has been put in place to include all the areas identified as requiring further work following the last monitoring visit.

It is becoming the norm for teaching assistants and teachers to plan work together and focus on the pupil's achievement. Staff have raised their expectations of what individuals can achieve across many areas of learning.

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

- improve the assessment and monitoring of pupil progress – **good in terms of systems and satisfactory in terms of outcomes.**

Personal development and well-being

The school has organised its structural development around the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda. A senior leader working with an identified governor takes responsibility to audit, plan and monitor developments in each of the outcomes. A focus this term has been on the emotional health and well-being of pupils. A range of strategies are being developed which include improving the behaviour management systems across the school which encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their

own behaviour. As a consequence of this work, a clear improvement to the way adults respond to and manage complex behaviour difficulties is evident. Considerable initiative and hard work has taken place to improve the behaviour of pupils at social times. A well thought out and exciting new playground has been opened which provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to learn to play constructively. Adults interact with children better at play and dinner times. Older students have age appropriate activities available to them and they make positive choices.

The emphasis to develop pupils' independence is beginning to have real impact. Children and young people help and support each other in a way not observed on previous monitoring inspections. This is a developing strength of the school. The business enterprise opportunities in the post-16 department provide good opportunities for young people to be involved in running a small business; the products are of a high quality and they are justifiably proud of their achievements.

Although this was not an area identified in the inspection of April 2005 as requiring improvement, good progress has been made in improving this aspect of pupils' development.

Quality of provision

The outcomes from this monitoring inspection reflect the accuracy of the school's own internal monitoring arrangements on the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders, with support from the LA and an outside consultant, were concerned that the strategies already put in place were not lifting the quality of teaching as substantially as they would have wished. There is still more satisfactory or inadequate teaching than good or outstanding. As a consequence, there is a determination from all leaders and most staff to improve this picture using a different strategy. Specific areas of weakness have been identified and appropriate action undertaken. Additionally, a well conceived programme of individual coaching is underway. Staff already involved in this process report positively on the value of joint planning with colleagues, team teaching with opportunities for reflection built in, and with a focus on particular individual needs to be addressed. Where coaching has taken place, albeit at initial stages, the quality of teaching and learning has improved.

There are some common elements that distinguish the best teaching and learning: planning which includes individual assessment levels to ensure activities are well matched to pupils; collaborative planning between teachers, teaching assistants and speech and language therapists; consistent use of

additional communication systems; and lively, relevant resources to engage pupils at a practical concrete level. Elements that exemplify weaker teaching and learning include: lack of accurate assessment at any level so planning for individual needs becomes impossible; inappropriate adult language of explanation or questioning; too lengthy periods of time when pupils are passive and expected to listen for too long; additional adults in the classroom not engaged or used well enough; and lessons that move at a slow pace with insufficient practical element.

The work undertaken to develop the curriculum reported in previous monitoring inspection letters continues to be successful. The introduction of a modern foreign language at Key Stage 2 will enhance further the opportunities at primary level. Subject coordinators are receiving training on how to track progress in their subjects across the curriculum. This is an important area to develop. There is a need to track and monitor the way in which long term planning, through the key stages, ensures that similar concepts, knowledge and skills are taught in a variety of ways and that progression is built effectively into the planning. For example, it is inappropriate that pupils at Key Stage 2 are taught virtually the same lesson as that in the Nursery and Foundation Stage. The provision for children in the nursery and foundation class is being reviewed. This is timely given the developments in the rest of the school and the need to improve further this area of the school's work.

An area of development has been the way school has opened its doors to become part of the wider community and enabled some pupils' access to mainstream schools and colleges. A particularly good feature is the contribution made by students with complex learning difficulties to a musical talent contest. Students have entered auditions, practised hard, and performed to an exceptional standard overcoming a number of personal challenges.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning, staff expertise- **satisfactory progress.**
- ensure the curriculum is fully taught, meets the needs of all pupils and has enough time for learning- **good progress.**

Leadership and management

The associate headteacher has worked closely with the school improvement adviser from the LA. Both have contributed significantly to the continued strategic operation of the school with the support and developing talents of the senior leadership team. Roles are clearly defined and all have a focus on school improvement. There is a clear energy and commitment for continued improvement: the school has a good capacity to improve. The appointment of the school improvement adviser to the post of acting headteacher has been welcomed by staff, who believe the transition in September will enable continuation of the successes already evident. This is important for staff morale which remains positive overall despite some staffing difficulties faced in the summer term.

School improvement strategies are securely in place and the leadership team and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. School self evaluation is good and this has contributed to the many initiatives that have superseded the original action plan following special measures. Evaluation is a strength of the school. The development of the school improvement plan is based on a robust analysis of current needs and future intentions.

There is a comprehensive staff development programme securely in place. A range of continuing professional development activities are available linked to performance management. A newly qualified teacher appointed prior to the school requiring special measures has received good support and training. Many staff speak highly of the increased opportunities to develop their skills across a range of areas.

The governing body is fully constituted with appropriate committees in place to provide strategic direction for the school. The replication of the leadership team's responsibilities by governors for the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda is a strong feature. The historical deficit in the budget has been dealt with satisfactorily by the LA. Urgent plans must be put in place to ensure that the potential deficit accruing in the forthcoming year(s), arising in part from over staffing as result of addressing inherent difficulties, are addressed. The leaders of the school, the governors and the LA are working together to provide a solution to this difficulty.

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

- improve the leadership and management throughout the school especially governance and financial management – **good progress**.

External support

The LA continues to provide a good standard of support, in a variety of ways, for continued school improvement. It has fully met its commitment in the statement for action and done much more. The involvement of the early years adviser to improve provision at the Nursery and Foundation Stage is one example of much needed additional support.

The LA continues to work well with the governing body and maintains a close eye on the school's progress. It is active in discussions with neighbouring schools to promote collaboration between them in order to provide more sensibly for the range of special educational needs in the LA.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – **satisfactory**.

Progress since previous monitoring visit – **satisfactory**.

Newly qualified teachers may now be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure the use of pupil assessment informs curricular planning and is embedded in the teaching and learning process.
- The LA, governing body and school leaders to work together to address the potential difficulty of managing a deficit budget for 2006-07.

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

Yours sincerely

Eileen Visser
H M Inspector