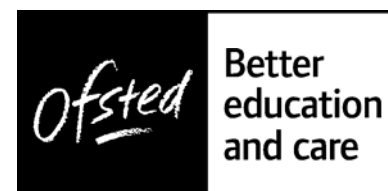


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3 July 2006

Mrs Sanderson
Acting Headteacher
Brookfield School
Fouldrey Avenue
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Lancashire
FY6 7HE

Dear Mrs Sanderson

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BROOKFIELD SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Joan Lock, Additional Inspector, to your school on 29th June 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 February 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, senior staff, a group of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority. Ten lessons or parts of lessons, a registration period, a review session and an assembly were observed.

Context

Despite its best endeavours the governing body has been unsuccessful in appointing a substantive head teacher since the resignation of the previous head teacher in June 2005. The governing body and the local authority are in discussion over the appointment of the acting head teacher to a fixed-term contract for three years. Although this has not yet been agreed the acting head teacher will continue in post

until December 2006. In addition a member of the senior management team has resigned from September 2006. An appointment has been made to this senior post and interviews are shortly to be held for another teacher vacancy.

Achievement and standards

The overall level of attainment is below that expected for the pupils' ages. Progress observed in lessons was satisfactory overall and was good in five lessons. This maintains the improvement seen on the last monitoring visit.

The Key Stage 3 results for 2006 in mathematics and science show that only three of the six eligible pupils achieved Level 4 rather than the expected level 5 in mathematics and four achieved this level in science. The remaining pupils were absent from the test. However, an analysis of performance against predicted grades provided by the local authority shows that overall achievement for those pupils sitting the tests is satisfactory. Attainment in the current Year 10 is more variable with some pupils achieving above the expected level in some subjects. Attainment in English at Key Stage 3 and in external examinations at Key Stage 4 in 2006 will be assessed on the next monitoring visit.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils are generally well behaved and overall the atmosphere in the school is calmer. Assemblies and tea and toast times encourage a friendly, sociable atmosphere. The provision of supervised football practice at lunchtime is making the lunch period more settled and enjoyable for pupils. In the most successful lessons the pupils can be polite and helpful. They work hard and are proud of their achievements, talking eagerly about what they have done. However, some pupils' attitude to work is inadequate; in some lessons they respond in an uncooperative and disinterested manner and fail to complete work. There are often times when pupils make unkind and disrespectful remarks to one another and to staff and use foul and abusive language. Staff respond inconsistently to these incidents and so pupils are not given clear messages to help them understand what is appropriate behaviour.

Attendance is inadequate. Since the last monitoring visit attendance has fallen to 58% in this half term. This is partly explained by Year 11 pupils being given study leave. This is not acceptable and gives the message that pupils need not attend school. In addition a variety of individual circumstances, including holidays and a managed transfer to another school, is reducing attendance. The senior staff continue to work closely with the educational welfare service and to liaise with parents, but the impact of this work is not yet consistent. An additional member of staff has been recruited to the senior management team with responsibility for raising attendance.

The school is continuing to develop a culture of celebrating achievement, where hard work and effort are highly valued and rewarded and pupils are responding more positively. They are pleased when they receive their points and are interested to know how well they are doing. They receive their certificates in assembly with a

growing sense of pride and confidence. The work of the school council is developing to give the pupils some understanding of the democratic process and a voice in school affairs. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of how to keep safe and healthy.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching of the permanent staff remains satisfactory overall with a consistent proportion of good teaching.

Where teaching is good, staff plan well-structured lessons with clear learning objectives. The learning objectives are shared with pupils so they understand what they are trying to achieve. There are clear explanations of the tasks to be undertaken and sensitive use of questioning extends understanding; for example, in mathematics a teacher used pupils' misconceptions to develop their understanding of triangles. The lessons involve a range of interesting activities which engage pupils' interest and a lively pace is maintained. Teachers and learning support assistants have high expectations and support pupils well. Relationships in these classes are good and there is effective behaviour management. There is increasing evidence of good use of assessment to support learning. In these lessons pupils make good progress and achieve well.

In the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory the management of behaviour was inadequate and pupils did not settle to the planned activities. The planning for the lessons did not provide a sufficient range of appropriate activities to engage the interest of the pupils. Pupils were rude and disruptive, ignoring the instructions of staff and using inappropriate language to staff and each other. In these lessons pupils failed to make progress.

The school offers the full range of subjects in the National Curriculum although in technology there are insufficient opportunities to study food and textiles. The school is rightly working to broaden the technology curriculum through links to other schools and through staff development. However, the accommodation and resources available to deliver the full technology curriculum remain inadequate.

The schools' system for reviewing its curriculum policies is working well and there have been improvements in the schemes of work. This is particularly evident in history and art, which now include more relevant learning experiences to reflect the pupils' special needs. However, there are too few examples of curriculum enrichment to make learning interesting, memorable and fun. Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development and include listening to music and consideration of themes of social value like loving, caring and self-worth.

The school has emerging plans to make the curriculum more relevant at Key Stage 4. There is negotiation with local colleges to extend the range of linked courses and with employers to provide some work-related learning. These developments are correctly linked to the vocational ambitions of the pupils. There are also sound plans to introduce further courses that lead to qualifications in basic skills. This is an important area for further development.

The school has a range of good policies and practices which ensure that pupils are generally safe and well cared for. There is a clear policy on behaviour based on encouraging good behaviour with rewards and helping the pupils make correct choices. The system is well understood by the pupils. Pupils are helped to become more responsible for the consequences of their actions and to understand their feelings and the feelings of others through an increasing focus on emotional literacy within lessons. Pupils' learning and behaviour are well supported by behavioural plans and individual education plans which provide clear guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve. These plans have improved further and now include targets based on educational psychological advice. Pupils are well supported by the understanding learning support assistants.

Despite these improvements the number of exclusions remains too high. In part this is explained by a policy of automatic exclusion for violent behaviour and the acting head teacher's clear focus on improving behaviour. However, there is insufficient analysis of the factors that lead to poor behaviour and the contribution of weaker teaching and support. The procedures to support excluded pupils on reintegration have improved since the last monitoring visit.

Staff continue to address incidents of bullying rigorously. Pupils say that they generally feel safe and that bullying is effectively dealt with by staff. They also say they have someone to talk to if they feel bullied or unhappy and this helps them deal with problems. A system for collating information on bullying is in place but the school needs to undertake a more detailed analysis of incidents.

Efforts to involve parents in the education of their children continue and this year there was good participation at annual review meetings. An improvement has been made to the format of interim school reports to provide parents with more detailed information on the progress of their children. Good regular contacts continue, including telephone calls and visits to parents who live some distance from school.

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

- Improving the overall quality of the teaching in all subjects where currently these are unsatisfactory – satisfactory progress
- Ensure that the full National Curriculum is available and improve the quality of the curriculum in all subjects where it is unsatisfactory - satisfactory progress
- Establishing more effective systems to involve parents in the education of their children - satisfactory progress
- Improving the effectiveness of care policies and procedures, the use of restraint and the management of pupils' behaviour– satisfactory progress
- Putting in place suitable measures to tackle pupils' concerns about bullying– satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher and the senior leadership team are working hard to drive forward improvement. However, progress now needs to accelerate. There is a new school improvement plan with a clear structure which builds on the developments within the action plan. The priorities identified are generally appropriate and there is a good focus on relating all initiatives to improving teaching and learning. However, it is a weakness that there is no explicit reference to raising attendance or to improving all the staff's ability to manage behaviour.

The co-ordination of data on the aspects of pupils' attainment and achievement continues to improve. There is an established system to record attainment data, exclusions, incidents of bullying, removals from lessons and attendance. However, the analysis of this information to establish patterns and issues to be addressed remains underdeveloped.

There is a detailed programme for monitoring and evaluating provision. However, there is variation in the quality and detail of the records and this limits their value as a tool to drive improvement. The acting head teacher has a clear view of the progress the school is making but overall the senior leadership team is not paying sufficient attention to the strategic overview of the progress being made as they work to address their individual priorities.

There has been a comprehensive programme of training to address whole staff and individual needs which has improved the quality of provision. The contribution of staff to the general life of the school has also improved. There are better links with other schools which are being used well to support the development of the role of subject leaders

The senior leadership team has recently been expanded with an additional member, and a new member has been appointed from September 2006. There is no clear plan yet in place to support the development of these individuals to fulfil their new roles.

The governing body has recently been strengthened with the appointment of two additional local authority governors. The governing body and its committees are now holding the school to account rigorously. The chair of governors is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is taking a proactive role in supporting the acting head teacher in planning for improvement.

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

- Developing effective systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school – satisfactory progress
- Ensure that key policies are up to date and parents are provided with information they should legally be given – satisfactory progress

External support

The local authority continues to provide effective support. However, in the new academic year the significant changes to the senior management team suggest that additional support from the monitoring and intervention team would be helpful. Support from the school adviser and the advisory team of the authority is having a positive impact. The authority has correctly identified that resources and accommodation for aspects of design and technology are inadequate. This is an issue requiring attention.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures - satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - satisfactory.

Priorities for further improvement

- Extend the analysis of all data to establish strengths and areas for development in the aspects of achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- Ensure that the curriculum benefits from regular enrichment activities and that the planned vocational curriculum at Key Stage 4 is delivered effectively.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education and Cultural Services in Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Garry Jones
H M Inspector