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Mrs B Harris
Associate Headteacher
Carlinghow Princess Royal Junior Infant and Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Harris

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CARLINGHOW PRINCESS ROYAL JUNIOR INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Christine Harrison and Tony Painter, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 14 and 15 June 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 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.

Focus of the visit and evidence gathered

For this inspection visit the inspectors focused on the progress of all the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2005. Inspectors observed lessons in each class and two assemblies. Discussions were held with the associate headteacher, associate deputy headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, several staff and pupils. Discussions also took place with the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA). A range of documents was examined, and pupils' conduct was observed around the school and at breaktimes.

Context

Since the school became subject to special measures in November 2005 there has been little change to the teaching staff. However, the chair of governors resigned, one teacher is currently on long-term sickness leave and the associate deputy

headteacher who joined the school in January will leave at the end of this term. The associate headteacher was placed at the school in September 2005 but was not present for the November inspection due to an injury and did not return to work until March 2006. During her absence the school was led by the acting deputy headteacher with support from a seconded headteacher.

Achievement and standards

The 2005 test results for Year 6 showed that pupils did not make as much progress as expected in Years 3 to 6 and that standards at the end of Year 6 were exceptionally low.

Since the inspection in November 2005, the school has improved its systems for monitoring pupils' progress and identifying underachievement. Teachers have tightened their lesson planning to involve pupils more actively in their learning and to match lesson content more closely to the needs of the various groups. Therefore pupils now make satisfactory progress in most lessons. However, this satisfactory progress is not sufficient to enable pupils to regain the ground they lost due to inadequate learning in the past. Hence, underachievement persists. Nevertheless, there have been some areas of significant improvement, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1 and in English in Key Stage 2. By contrast, pupils' standards in mathematics, which were previously a relative strength, have fallen in both key stages.

Most learning support assistants are now well informed and working effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Hence these pupils usually make acceptable progress. The school has identified those pupils who are gifted and talented and teachers are beginning to plan extra challenges for these pupils. However this planning is at an early stage, higher attaining pupils say that some tasks are too easy and the progress made by these pupils is often barely adequate in relation to their capabilities.

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

- Raise standards and improve progress for all groups of pupils but especially for the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. – **inadequate**

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour is improving both in class and around the school. Pupils are gaining a better understanding of how their actions affect other people and there is a growing awareness of what behaviour is unacceptable and why. The pupils say that

there are now fewer incidents of bullying. The number of exclusions has fallen this year. However, there are still weaknesses in many pupils' attitudes to learning: poor concentration, weak listening skills, and a tendency to chat and fidget are common and slow down learning for the whole class. Pupils say how much better they learn when they are doing something, making something or using their imagination. However, opportunities for exercise and outdoor work are significantly limited by the unsafe condition of a large part of the school grounds.

The school has worked hard to improve its links with parents and to convince them of the importance of pupils attending regularly. Any instances of unexplained absence are immediately followed up. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance. Nevertheless, attendance figures remain slightly below the national average, largely as a result of a few persistent poor attenders who stubbornly resist the school's efforts and initiatives.

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

- Improve the behaviour of pupils – **satisfactory**
- Work with parents, carers and pupils to improve attendance – **satisfactory**

Quality of provision

The school has introduced a positive range of strategies to raise the quality of teaching and learning, including programmes to help pupils catch up, following past weaker learning. New curriculum guidance has been established to ensure that sufficient time is allotted to different subjects and further links are being established between subjects. New planning systems give a clearer focus on what pupils need to learn in their lessons and how this will be evaluated. Better involvement of teaching assistants in the planning process helps them to be aware of how they can aid learning. In many lessons, this is successful and their work accelerates the pace of learning.

The quality of teaching was good in three lessons, satisfactory in 14 and inadequate in two. Good relationships are helping to establish better behaviour in classes and pupils respond well to opportunities for the more active and independent learning which teachers are beginning to include in lessons. Assessment systems have been refined and improved and most teachers make greater use of the information to plan their lessons. A positive strategy, in many lessons, was the use of clearly identified targets for pupils to help them to understand what they need to do to improve. However, teachers do not use these targets consistently to ensure that pupils are given the best level of challenge in all lessons. Pupils occasionally lose attention when the pace of lessons drops or they have to just sit and listen to the teacher.

Some teachers set work that is far too easy for the higher attainers and in these lessons pupils do not learn enough and become bored.

Pupils with additional learning needs are now more accurately identified and their individual education plans indicate ways they can be supported. Although teachers are familiar with the requirements, they do not yet consistently take full account of the advice in the plans. Pupils with physical disabilities are well supported and play as full a part as possible in all lessons.

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

- Make better use of teaching assistants to improve pupils' progress. – **satisfactory**

Leadership and management

The senior leadership team, all of whom are temporary, has an appropriate focus on raising standards. Monitoring procedures have improved and teachers are now held more to account through tighter checks on planning and frequent lesson observations. However, these strategies are not robust and weaknesses in teaching are not dealt with quickly enough. Several staff and representatives from the LA have contributed to the overly detailed and extensive plans to guide the key aspects of the school's work. These unwieldy documents cover all areas requiring improvement in substantial detail but they are not pithy enough. Managers have tried to focus on everything at once rather than prioritising the most important issues. Consequently, the full impact of these plans has yet to be seen.

Senior leaders know how to improve the school but are not yet gelling well enough because of a lack of clarity of roles and overlap of responsibilities. The absence of any permanent senior manager also adds to this uncertainty. Nevertheless, improved assessment procedures and a greater focus on detailed planning of lessons have resulted in a more corporate view of what makes a good lesson. These strategies have provided the school with a more accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, as well as its progress, but there has been a lack of rigour in taking more direct action to improve teaching and raise standards.

The governing body is now more effective. Governors are becoming better aware of their responsibilities and are taking an active involvement in the work of the school. The chair of governors has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school and is particularly anxious to attain stability in management.

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

- Ensure all school leaders and the governing body meet their responsibilities to raise standards, improve teaching and enhance pupils' personal development. – **satisfactory**

External support

The LA's statement of action is satisfactory; the quality and impact of the external support provided for the school by the LA are good. In addition to the appointment of two experienced governors to strengthen the governing body and the seconded senior managers, there has been extensive support to the school from a team of specialist officers. The school contact officer has coordinated the process and her support is highly valued by the school.

Main Judgements

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

Quality of LA's statement of action – **satisfactory**

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure plans are succinct and focus on the impact of actions on outcomes for pupils.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of senior managers and increase the rigour with which actions are implemented to tackle areas for improvement.
- Use the information about pupils consistently to plan lessons that provide challenge for all.

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

Yours sincerely



Anthony Briggs

Additional Inspector