



6 July 2006

Mrs S Tresilian
New Monument School
Alpha Road
Maybury
Woking
GU22 8HA

Dear Mrs Tresilian

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF NEW MONUMENT SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with George Rayner, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in January 2006.

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 interim headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, teaching and administration staff, a group of pupils, and representatives from the Local Authority (LA). The chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) was unable to attend the school, but had two long telephone discussions with the lead inspector.

Context

Since the January inspection, the interim headteacher has moved to lead and manage the school from two to five days a week. The shadow governing body has been appointed and is working in parallel with the IEB. Relationships with the local faith community have improved.

Achievement and standards

The school has made good progress in developing suitable and accurate assessment systems. Records were previously organised in a range of formats and places. They have now been compiled in a consistent, accessible form and provide a coherent picture of each pupil's progress in English and mathematics. The records are providing a much more effective source of information for ensuring that lessons meet the needs of all pupils, and that those in danger of underachieving are speedily identified and given the extra help that they need.

The improvement in assessment is not fully in place. The new system does not include subjects other than English and mathematics; information about pupils' starting points in Year 1 is incomplete as it will be based on a careful assessment of pupils' skills at the end of their reception year; and staff have not had training to use the new computer system so they can have easy and immediate access to the records. The school knows what it needs to do to next and has appropriate plans to extend the assessment system further.

The impact of the improved systems is beginning to be seen and pupils are making better progress. During the monitoring visit, pupils made at least satisfactory progress in almost all the lessons observed and good progress in the majority, which is a significant improvement. Lesson plans show that most teachers are improving their use of assessment information to plan to meet the needs of their pupils, particularly those with significant learning difficulties and those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school's records indicate that the standards of current Year 6 pupils are higher in English and mathematics than in 2005.

In Year 2, the proportion of current pupils reaching expected standards in writing and mathematics has slightly improved since 2005, although they are slightly lower in reading. The better standards reflect new strategies to help pupils to improve their writing and their command of language for understanding mathematical tasks. However, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 is much lower than last year. This indicates a need to review the quality of challenge for the highest attaining pupils.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- Increase pupils' progress by developing suitable and accurate systems of assessment so that work matches pupils' capabilities – good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils clearly enjoy their work. They are generally very well behaved, highly attentive in lessons and keen to learn. Pupils are very polite and friendly and happy to ask questions and share their knowledge with visitors. Inspectors particularly noted the enthusiasm with which pupils welcomed conversation, and the enjoyment with they talked about the school and their work. The staff report that pupils' self-esteem is growing. They increasingly answer questions and voice their opinions without fear of being 'wrong.' They are more involved in making decisions about their own work and how well they are doing, and have more responsibility for the school community. For example, the school council has responsibility for the playtime activity boxes. Since the cessation of a tuck shop selling sugar-based foods, the pupils generally make healthy choices at snack time, such as choosing mini-cucumbers or fruit to eat. Pupils enjoy the emphasis on celebrating their own and others' festivals and their cultural development is improving. This is supported by the school's greater liaison with the local faith community.

The school is working to improve attendance by teaching pupils about the importance of coming to school regularly. As a result, unauthorised absence has reduced since the January inspection and attendance overall has improved, although it is still significantly below the national average.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- Improve attendance by reducing the proportion of authorised and unauthorised absence – satisfactory progress.

Quality of provision

The school has introduced a good range of measures to improve the quality of teaching and these have had a positive impact. During the monitoring visit, eleven lessons were observed. All but one of these was at least satisfactory and the majority were good. One was outstanding. This is a significant

improvement from the time of the January inspection when there was too little good teaching.

Staff training and development work have improved the pace of lessons and the consistency and format of lesson planning so that suitable support and work for pupils with varying needs is clearly identified. This has been underpinned by the information gained from the newly established systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress in English and mathematics. Meeting the needs of every individual is now seen as a whole school responsibility rather than a 'bolted on' addition to class work. The school is beginning to reassess the language development of pupils with English as an additional language in line with national curriculum descriptors which will help this process further.

Generally, teachers are efficient in ensuring that all pupils are fully involved in activities. In the best lessons, the infective enthusiasm of teachers had a profound impact upon the pupils' own responses, so that the lessons were very enjoyable experiences and the pupils achieved very well. Less effective learning occurred where teaching did not provide sufficient challenge, or where the approach was too formal and dampened individuals' spirit and creativity. Usually, teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is very effective in monitoring and supporting the work of all pupils. In a small number of lessons, however, the support for pupils with significant language needs did not provide adequately for them, and occasionally, offered them nothing different to their English-speaking peers. This situation is unsatisfactory.

Resources throughout the school have been significantly improved, and the environment transformed, to support both teaching and learning. The reception classrooms and external play area have been fully re-furbished. A full, up-to-date information and communication technology (ICT) suite has been installed and, with the support of a very effective teaching technician, has improved the ICT skills and potential for learning of pupils and staff alike. The library has been restocked, Year 6 pupils are cataloguing the books onto the new computerised system and the library is now a helpful resource to stimulate pupils' independent work. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in each classroom. During the monitoring visit, these were used very effectively to increase the excitement of learning in the best lessons. However, their use was limited in other lessons because staff have not yet

had training in how to use them to the full. This is planned for the near future.

The curriculum is at an early stage of redevelopment in order to better reflect pupils' cultures, faiths, abilities and interests, and a number of systems and practices have been introduced or tightened to provide more effectively for their health, safety and welfare. Pupils are clear in expressing the view that provision has significantly improved in recent months and they are highly appreciative of this.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- Improve teaching with lessons which have good pace and tasks matched to pupils' abilities and their level of fluency in English - good progress

Leadership and management

The interim headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have worked hard and systematically to address the issues for improvement identified in the January inspection. In addition, they have tackled a number of other weaknesses, such as financial management and health and safety matters. The IEB has been fully involved and supportive of the school, and the new shadow governing body is gradually assuming responsibility. The governance of the school has therefore been effectively stabilised. Links with the local faith community have been strengthened, which reflects the need identified in a recent independent review of the school's practice.

Self-evaluation is good and the school's managers are realistic about what they should do next. Clear action plans have been set for each key area for improvement and have been carefully followed. The outcome of this work is that a large number of good new systems and practices have been put into place. Careful monitoring by the school's managers and the LA shows that improvement is underway. Some improvements have already had significant results, for example in the quality of teaching and the establishment of effective assessment systems. In many other areas, though, it is too soon to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the new systems.

A major priority has been to replace supply staff with permanent appointments, where possible. This has been achieved and there will be a full complement of permanent class teachers in September. Some of these will be newly qualified teachers (NQT) who are currently employed at the school as supply teachers. A new staffing structure and leadership team is due to be

implemented at the start of the next academic year but the rationale for the composition of these is not yet sharp enough and needs more work. Two further factors mean that the stabilisation of staff and leadership and management has not yet been fully achieved. Firstly, there is the uncertainty over the position of staff, including the substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher, who are currently absent on long term sickness. Secondly, the interim head teacher is 'on loan' and will reduce her time in school from next term. Until these factors are fully resolved, the leadership and management are not fully stabilised which affects the certainty of the school's capacity for further improvement. This, therefore, is satisfactory at the moment.

A task group has been established to distribute the responsibility for developing the language capability of all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, throughout the school. This goes some way to addressing this key issue identified in the January inspection, and practice is beginning to change for the better for pupils with English as an additional language. At present, though, no single person has been charged with overall responsibility for the effectiveness of this provision, and improvements still need to be made to make sure that the pupils are suitably supported at all times. In particular, the role of the specialist support staff requires further clarification, as do the arrangements for monitoring the quality of their work.

Systems have been tightened, and a number of new measures have been implemented to improve pupils' attendance. These include office systems, closer liaison with the Education Welfare Department of the LA, and more indirect measures such as asking the local Mufti to talk to parents about the importance of regular school attendance. These efforts have had an initial positive impact, but attendance is still not good enough. The school has begun to look at the attendance data to identify what more it can do, and this work should be extended.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- Stabilise its leadership and management to ensure that key weaknesses identified in this report are addressed effectively – satisfactory progress.
- Develop a suitable and viable staffing structure to meet the diverse linguistic needs of pupils – satisfactory progress.

External support

The quality of support offered by the LA has been good. It has been given in a variety of forms, for example training for staff and the IEB; support for the development of the school's action plans for addressing the identified

weaknesses; monitoring the school's practice to evaluate improvement, both with and independently of senior managers; and helping the school investigate and address other significant weaknesses identified by the interim managers such as financial management and health and safety. More support for key issue 2, related to the staffing for pupils with English as an additional language, would be helpful to the school.

The LA's statement of action is good. It is an honest statement, accepting appropriate responsibility for its inadequacies in previously keeping a close enough eye on the school. The statement outlines a suitable package of support, detailed further in an action plan.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory progress.

Quality of LA's statement of action – good

No more newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve attainment by providing challenging work for the higher attaining pupils in each class;
- Ensure the new arrangements to provide a suitable and viable staffing structure to meet the diverse linguistic needs of the pupils include appropriate accountability and quality assurance measures;
- Clarify the role and function of each person on the proposed leadership team and those with whole-school responsibilities to ensure leadership and management are stabilised as far as possible.

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

Yours sincerely

Judith Charlesworth
Additional Inspector