



7 July 2006

Mrs Adam
Peel Park Primary School
Peel Park Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD2 4PR

Dear Mrs Adam

FRESH START: MONITORING INSPECTION OF PEEL PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Anthony Painter, Additional Inspector, to your school on 5 and 6 July 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 opened in September 2005.

This letter will be published 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

During the visit 14 parts of lessons were observed and samples of work were examined. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle managers, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority. Informal discussions were held with members of staff and with pupils. A range of documents was also scrutinised.

Context

Peel Park Primary School opened as a Fresh Start school on 1 September 2005 and replaced Undercliffe Primary, a school that had been removed from the category of special measures in February 2005. Most of the staff appointed to the new school worked previously at Undercliffe. A further appointment of a Foundation Stage leader was made and she joined the new school in January 2006. The headteacher of Peel Park had worked previously

as consultant headteacher at Undercliffe Primary. Significant improvements were made at that time and all staff have worked hard since the school opened to build on the progress made. The deputy headteacher is a governor at another local Fresh Start school and her community position is aiding collaborative working between the two schools. The governing body is new, having been established in November 2005, and a number of the governors are new to governance. The school achieved the Investors in People award in May 2006.

There are 360 pupils who attend the school. The number on roll has increased steadily and is set to rise further in September 2006. The school represents the diverse mix of cultural and heritage backgrounds of its community. A large proportion of the pupils, 82%, are new to English or in the early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals and who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Inward mobility is an issue for the school with numbers of pupils fluctuating quite rapidly, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement has improved; it is now good and standards attained are broadly average. This progress has been secured as a result of improvements made to the quality of provision for pupils. The school knows, however, that the greatest improvements in standards have been made from Reception through to Year 3; this is because older pupils have much catching up to do because of their underachievement in the past. Nevertheless, the gap between pupils' attainment and national expectations is narrowing, although the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels remains low. The school's data has shown that boys have not always achieved as well as they should. To address this issue, the staff have worked hard to provide a variety of learning experiences in lessons that engage all pupils well and so aid their achievement. This was confirmed during the lessons observed when most pupils made good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils put great effort into meeting teachers' high expectations and they show very good attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy school life; they are attentive and try hard with all their work. Other strengths are the very good relationships that exist at all levels. In particular pupils refer to the ways that different cultures and backgrounds are respected within school. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in classes and around the school. Pupils feel that behaviour has improved, and particularly as a result of the increased opportunities there are

for them to take responsibilities. The 'buddy' system, for example, supports the school's positive ethos well and is acknowledged by staff as an important factor in the good running of the school. The process of applying for a buddy post and being interviewed aids pupils' understanding of the wider world of work. The school council contributes to pupils' understanding of communities as it thoughtfully considers ways to improve play and other provision. Pupils cheerfully and willingly undertake many other responsibilities in school, taking pride in their successes. Older pupils, for example, identify how they run the fruit tuck shop, which contributes to their own health as well as raising money for play equipment.

Although pupils' attendance, at 93.3%, is below the national average, the school has very strong measures in place to monitor attendance and to secure improvement. The school has made its expectations clear and there are good links with the Education Welfare Services to follow through concerns.

Quality of provision

Improvement in this school has resulted from a clear and effective focus on pupils' learning and achievement; as a result, teaching and learning are now good. Teachers and learning assistants work well together. Learning assistants are clear in their roles and they contribute well to pupils' learning. Staff pose questions with good levels of challenge that make pupils think hard and express their thoughts and ideas. This process encourages pupils' learning well and most pupils are keen to join in, although some are not as confident as others in expressing themselves.

Teachers plan work that will challenge pupils to do their best; a positive example here is the specific approach outlined for those pupils with additional learning needs. As a result, in most lessons, tasks are securely matched to pupils' abilities and most teachers group pupils appropriately for activities. However, there is room to increase the challenge for more able pupils, particularly as standards continue to rise.

Teachers make increasing use of clearly identified targets for pupils that help them understand what they need to do to improve; marking often refers directly to these targets although this is not consistent through school. Marking also frequently presents further challenges, however, there is sometimes no clear follow up to the challenge set.

The school has introduced curriculum guidance that ensures teachers allot sufficient time to all subjects. This successfully draws on local and national guidance, and increasingly good links are being made between different

subjects. Staff work well as a team. They have a shared understanding of how to establish effective classroom practice in order to support the ways that pupils learn best. This is seen in the provision for pupils with English as an additional language and, for example, in the setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 which is particularly effective in helping them to make good progress.

The school ensures that pupils are safe, well cared for and can thrive. The school's assessment systems have been substantially improved and now pupils' progress is carefully tracked through school. Rigorous systems of review ensure that if any pupils fall behind, the causes are identified and remedies introduced. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are accurately identified and are supported well. Very good attention to the needs of the high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language ensures they make good progress. The school's positive strategy of identifying their needs within each teacher's planning ensures that a good range of support, including resources and attention to vocabulary, guides their learning well.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher who also demonstrates strong leadership skills. The headteacher's vision for the school is supported by everyone. She has inspired and enabled all staff to embrace change and to improve. For example, the headteacher has empowered staff to be effective in their roles, as demonstrated by the assistant headteacher and coordinators of the core subjects. She recognises, however, that further work is to be done to develop all staff in their role as leaders and managers within school. Nonetheless, the school has built an effective staff team and, with the governors, they have rightly put learning firmly at the heart of the school's work.

School improvement planning is good; it is clearly focussed on the need to raise standards. The school evaluates its work effectively and knows how well it is doing and so improvement planning is based on an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors have a clear understanding of where the school is in its development and what remains to be done. They have benefited significantly from training, guidance and support received from the local authority and from the headteacher. As a result, a structure of committees has been established and governors are well led by an effective and supportive chair. The governing body has also worked well on its own self evaluation. As some governors are new to governance, they recognise that ongoing training is important so that the rigour with which they hold the school to account is

maintained. The school is making good progress and has good capacity to improve further.

External support

Education Bradford (EB) has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The school improvement officer has provided effective support for the school leading up to its Fresh Start and since Peel Park Primary opened in September 2005. Support for governors was also provided by Human Resources and this has been greatly valued. The impact of such support has built the confidence of the new governing body. The school reports, however, their grave concern regarding the late submission by EB of the school's plans for a capital bid of Fresh Start funds. As a result, the school has not been awarded funding for the construction of community facilities which was available to them as part of the Fresh Start initiative.

Main Judgements

The school's overall progress - **good**.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure consistency and challenge in provision so that all more able pupils attain as well as they can.
- Further develop middle managers so that all staff with responsibilities are effective in their roles.

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

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley
H M Inspector