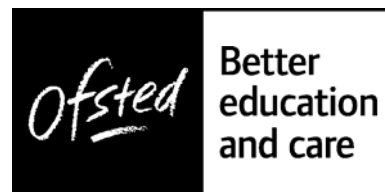


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Mrs Christine Stain
The Acting Headteacher
Chilvers Coton Community Infant School
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4 July 2006

Dear Mrs Stain

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CHILVERS COTON COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Pat Lowe, Additional Inspector, to your school on 28 and 29 June 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 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 including the school's self-evaluation form (SEF) and the interim school development plan, and looked at pupils' work. They observed 15 lessons and two school assemblies and met with the headteacher, key members of staff, groups of pupils, parents, non teaching staff, the acting chair of governors, and two representatives from the local authority (LA).

Context

The local authority seconded an experienced headteacher and two teachers to the school, one to the Nursery and another to the Foundation Stage for two

terms. Following the successful appointment of a permanent experienced headteacher to the school to start in September 2006, these key staff will start to decrease the amount of time they spend in the school, although the acting headteacher will retain a consultancy and mentoring role to the new headteacher. Two supply teachers have shared one of the classes following the long-term absence of a member of staff. Budget cuts and falling roles will enable the school to reorganise its provision in September 2006 to include some mixed age classes. The acting headteacher has temporarily assumed the role as special needs coordinator and subject leader for religious education. A new acting chair of governors has been appointed since the last visit.

Achievement and standards

Standards overall remain inadequate. Although there has been an improvement in the number of pupils achieving a higher level in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2, standards remain below average in English mathematics, and science. The school provides a full curriculum since the introduction of the Warwickshire agreed syllabus for religious education. Standards in nearly all subjects, including religious education, are below average because the role of subject leaders in areas other than English and mathematics is underdeveloped. The use and development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support learning in other subjects has improved and is now satisfactory. Developments in ICT include the use of digital cameras, programmable toys and dedicated time in the computer suite for the development of pupils' skills.

Most pupils are still underachieving because of gaps in their knowledge arising from some unsatisfactory teaching in the past. Although pupils have made progress in reading and writing, there remain weaknesses in their ability to make inferences from what they read and to write with imagination and flair. The teaching of pupils in ability groups in English and mathematics in Year 2 has had a positive effect on standards, except with regard to lower attaining pupils where remedial action has not been timely. Science becomes a focus for development in September 2006.

Despite standards being below national expectations, there has been insufficient use of their assessment and target setting data to identify underachieving groups and take remedial action.

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

- raise standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT and RE – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Pupil attitudes have improved since the last visit and are good most of the time. As at the last visit, attitudes and behaviour are good when well

managed by the class teacher. Only one lesson was observed where pupil attitudes and behaviour were less than satisfactory.

Monthly monitoring data by the office manager confirms that attendance, whilst still below national averages, is improving. The first day call strategy has ensured that parents are telephoned first thing in the morning to find out the reason for their child's absence. This has had the impact of a reduction in the number of calls made by the school and an increase in the number of calls that parents are making to the school to explain their child's absence. Parents are now much more aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment and report that the issue has been accepted by the community. The Wise Owl award that celebrates the highest monthly attendance by a class is a coveted award presented in assembly and is motivating pupils to attend.

Pupils enjoy their lessons a lot more now. They are provided with more opportunities to engage with stimulating resources such as weighing scales, real money, programmable electronic toys, and computers. They are much more involved in their own learning, for example they enjoy working out mathematics problems with a partner, and taking turns and celebrating each other's achievements in physical education. A school council has been successfully established and has proved to be a strong, confident pupil voice. The council has organised non uniform days, raised money for playground equipment, and established a friendship bench in the playground as a place to make friends when children feel lonely. The link with a school council from another school allowed members to take pride in their achievements, compare and contrast the two councils, and make new friends. These various developments are preparing pupils well to take their place in the world of work and for their economic well-being.

The national fruit scheme and the school meals encourage pupils to eat healthy food with daily fruit and vegetables. However, whilst the school is encouraging a healthy lifestyle, nearly two thirds of pupils bring a packed lunch and too many include sweets, chocolate and crisps. Parents report that this is largely because most will eat a cooked meal at home in the evening. Pupils move around school safely in an orderly way and play sensibly at lunchtimes on the stimulating field with its secret garden and views of the canal. However, there remain some health and safety issues in play areas with uneven drains in the playground, holes in the field where climbing apparatus has been removed, paving slabs stacked against a fence, and some tins and glass discarded over the canal fence.

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

- improve attendance – satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Some of the teaching issues reported at the last visit have been resolved. During this visit 15 lessons or parts of lessons and two assemblies were inspected. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory or better in 14 lessons, including nine good lessons. Teaching was inadequate in one Year 1 lesson. This represents good improvement since the first monitoring visit when two out of 17 lessons were good, one in the Nursery and one in Year 2, and seven lessons were inadequate in Year 1 and one in Year 2. Teaching is now consistently good in the Nursery and Reception year.

In the best lessons most pupils make good progress because: planning builds on previous learning; the work is well matched to the prior attainment or the ability and needs of pupils; and, key skills are taught and used across the curriculum. Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and relationships are important factors in good learning.

In the one inadequate lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory, many pupils did not enjoy their work and the behaviour of a few pupils was inappropriate. As a result, they made unsatisfactory progress.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage classes is good and informs future planning. In Year 1 and Year 2 it is satisfactory in English and mathematics and is used consistently. In other subjects, assessment remains inadequate particularly in science. It is not always used by most teachers in their planning or to address weaknesses. In a Year 2 class, for example, the fact that not a single pupil was likely to achieve national expectations in science was not picked up until shortly before the end of year teacher assessments and it was, therefore, too late to provide additional support for these pupils. Personal targets in English and mathematics have been refined since the last monitoring visit; they are shared with pupils and parents. Pupils in Year 2 know what National Curriculum level they are working at and what they should do to achieve the next level. Teachers share this knowledge with parents, who are now more able to give appropriate support to their children.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets legal requirements and is matched to pupils' needs. Visits and visitors contribute to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Well designed activities provide children in the Nursery and Reception year with a good range of experiences and ensure that children achieve well. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 gives priority to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school is beginning to make links across the curriculum to enable pupils to use and further develop these skills. In subjects other than English and mathematics, the curriculum is very basic. There is little enrichment and this has an adverse effect on raising standards across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is good. The high level of care and support given to pupils contributes to their sense of

well-being and enjoyment in learning. The acting headteacher has been proactive in making the school a safer place to be. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are in place. Procedures for child protection are securely in place and are understood by all staff. Pupils say that they are well cared for and know who to go to if they experience difficulties. Strenuous efforts are made to forge positive links with parents as partners in the education of their children. Induction and transfer arrangements are good. There are good links with outside agencies to safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable children, including those with learning difficulties.

The impact of care, support and guidance on pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. Individual targets are set in English and mathematics in Year 2 but not in science. Improved assessment procedures to track pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics are now in place but are not yet having sufficient impact to ensure that all learners make adequate progress. Systems to track individual pupils' academic progress are inconsistent in science. As a result, procedures for guiding and supporting learning do not fully ensure that each pupil makes the best possible progress. Support for pupils in the early stages of learning English is good.

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

- ensure that teaching and the learning activities meet the needs of all learners in Years 1 and 2 so that they do as well as they should – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has continued her outstanding and inspirational work in leading the school forward and has successfully raised staff morale, focusing the staff purposefully on the improvement agenda. All are now working together with renewed energy and determination. Inadequate teaching issues have been addressed and new systems established that make the running of the school much more efficient. For example, resources have been audited by subject leaders, restocked and effectively stored in accessible store cupboards ready for the next unit of work. The acting headteacher has done a lot in a short space of time. With the appointment of a new headteacher, the capacity of the senior management to improve standards cannot be judged at the time of this visit.

Careful weekly monitoring of planning by the acting headteacher has retained the high profile of planning. Joint monitoring of teaching with the local authority link inspector has been regular and has ensured that teaching support is provided relative to need. A satisfactory interim school development plan based on the LA support plan has been completed, although it lacks sufficient success criteria and the remedial action that will be taken should targets be missed. The school self-evaluation form has also

been completed. This is an accurate document but lacks sufficient judgements.

The role and accountability of senior managers and subject leaders, as at the last visit, remains underdeveloped. The members have had the opportunity to monitor teachers' planning every half term, audit resources and ensure subsequent units of work are fully resourced. However, their role in monitoring teaching, with the exception of mathematics, has not yet started. All staff now have a job description but managers at all levels are not sufficiently held to account for their areas of responsibility and the specific role they have to play in raising standards.

Parents are more involved and have noted a change in the school. Their children come home and talk more about their learning experiences. They like the new spelling scheme and feel more involved in supporting their children at home. Increasing numbers of parents attend curriculum evenings and celebration assemblies. More parents have replied to questionnaires and all their concerns have been individually followed up.

A new acting chair of governors has been appointed since the last visit and is strongly committed to her role and holding the school to account. It is too early to gauge the impact of the governing body. Governors have been assigned to a different issue of the post Ofsted action plan and some are involved in monitoring and reporting back to governors.

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

- ensure that the agreed developments are implemented and monitored effectively and that the curriculum meets statutory requirements – satisfactory
- improve pupils' independence and initiative and involve them and their parents in helping to make decisions about how the school can improve – satisfactory.

External support

The external support provided by the LA has been good. The secondment of an acting headteacher and two other key staff by the LA has been effective in stabilising the school, raising staff morale, and tackling the issues that the school needed to face. The LA has also supported the school in resolving the inadequate teaching issues in some classes and in appointing a permanent headteacher to start in September 2006. The statement of action and support and monitoring plan has been rewritten and is much more supportive to the school. It has also strongly influenced school development planning. The collaborative, negotiated nature of the support has meant that it has been much more effective, for example the guided reading and problem solving initiatives. However, the plan does not sufficiently focus on termly success criteria to measure the impact of the LA support.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Use assessment tracking data for the early identification of underachieving pupils and instigate remedial action.
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of all subject leaders,
- Further develop the role of the deputy headteacher.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children, Young People and Families for Warwickshire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clive Kempton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Clive Kempton
H M Inspector