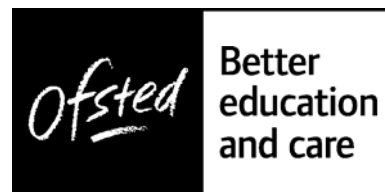


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Mrs D Buckingham
The Acting Headteacher
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6 June 2006

Dear Mrs Buckingham

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KENN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Garth Muton, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 May 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.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, subject leaders, pupils on the school council, parents, two governors and two representatives from the local authority (LA).

Context

A full time acting headteacher was appointed in January 2006 for one year. A senior member of staff is currently absent on long term leave. Many governors, including the chair of governors, are new. Impressive improvements have been made to the school building, including the addition of a computer suite.

Achievement and standards

Standards in writing and mathematics remain too low, although they are improving, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Many pupils enter school with above average standards. The school's assessment of Year 2 pupils in 2005 showed that the percentage of pupils achieving higher levels in mathematics and writing was well below the national average. The 2005 national test results for Year 6 pupils in mathematics and English were broadly average, although they fell in mathematics. Current standards in Year 2 are broadly average in writing and mathematics. In Year 6 more pupils are in line to achieve the higher levels in English and mathematics.

School data shows that some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. In most lessons, pupils make sound progress because the teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Higher ability pupils do not always make enough progress because there are not always enough opportunities for their skills to be developed further by challenging tasks. In good lessons pupils are challenged and achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress due to focused support by teaching assistants.

Standards are improving because the quality of teaching has improved. Staff work more closely as a team, with a shared aim of enabling pupils to achieve their best. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used more effectively to support pupils' learning.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory and often much better. Most pupils have a good sense of social responsibility. The most noticeable improvement in behaviour is in assemblies. This has come about because the staff have consistently higher expectations of how the pupils will behave. Assemblies also encourage spiritual development by emphasising how much every individual is valued.

Opportunities for pupils to engage in physical activities have increased. Pupils are taught about healthy eating. Healthy lunches are available. There are more opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school and to the community. The new twice-monthly sharing assemblies are highlights for everyone in the school community. The school council has been very active. It has taken a leading role by organising an art competition and a recycling scheme.

Pupils are appreciative of the improvements made to the school buildings and resources. They feel safe. They say that everyone knows one another and there is no incidence of bullying. They enjoy school, although in some lessons pupils lack enthusiasm and do not respond enough. Procedures to improve attendance have been strengthened.

Quality of provision

Lessons observed were mainly satisfactory and, in some, teaching and learning were good. No inadequate lessons were observed. The most successful lessons were well focused with effective use of time. Pupils were sure of their teachers' expectations and worked hard to meet them. However, the pace of some lessons was too slow. In these lessons pupils were not fully engaged and time was lost as teachers tried different ways to maintain their interest. Long term staff absence has interrupted the continuity of teaching in Years 1 and 2. This has impeded the pupils' learning and progress.

The teaching and learning have improved. The main emphasis has been on the teaching of writing, which has improved. Lesson structure and planning are more effective. Introductions to lessons are more interesting. New ways of planning mathematics are being developed to end the heavy reliance on textbooks and worksheets and to provide consistently stimulating and challenging work. This work has only just started and some inconsistencies remain.

The headteacher has organised the assessment of all the pupils' attainment. Teachers now know the attainment of the pupils in their class and each individual's expected progress by the end of the year. Teachers have started to use this information to make sure that activities are matched to the ability of each pupil, but there is still much more work to do. There are examples of very good marking, but these are the exceptions. A new marking policy, which will give pupils guidance on the next steps in their learning, has been agreed. There are a few examples of inaccurate marking.

Now that the attainment of each pupil has been assessed, the school intends to introduce individual or group targets. A system based upon what pupils 'must, could, or should do' is in its very early stages, as are other methods of involving pupils in assessment. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is scheduled for an extensive review.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The use of the outdoor area to enhance the learning has improved. The use of purposeful play and independent learning to support learning is also developing.

Improvements to the school curriculum include regular input from a specialist drama teacher. Plans are in place to increase the amount of teaching time to meet the recommended minimum. The new computer suite provides improved opportunities for ICT. The planning of engaging and challenging work on an everyday basis remains a priority. Staff and pupils are adjusting to the expectation of an increased amount of practical and independent learning in lessons. Parents are pleased that there are more after school activities, although most of these are on a fee paying basis.

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

- improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. She has worked successfully with the LA, staff and governors to significantly improve morale in the school. A stimulating working environment has been created with improved resources, particularly in ICT. This is having a positive impact on learning.

Subject leadership is underdeveloped, although skills are being developed through professional training and support provided by the LA. The acting headteacher is currently covering some major areas, including mathematics and special educational needs, which make significant demands on her time.

The involvement of governors has recently increased. The recently appointed chair of governors is knowledgeable and fully committed to the improvement of the school. The governors are enthusiastic and keen to improve their role. Many have been appointed since the previous inspection. The LA has also appointed a governor for a year who has had a positive impact in developing the school's governance. The governors have recently begun to visit the school to increase their first hand knowledge of the school and how it works. The writing of minutes is more thorough. Agendas show that progress made in relation to the action plan is included in meetings. Governors are beginning to provide the necessary support to the acting headteacher and staff.

Background checks are made on adults working in the school. The child protection policy has been agreed and recent training has taken place for staff.

There has been an impressive amount of monitoring of teaching and learning by the LA and acting headteacher, with constructive feedback. Lesson observations indicate that teachers have taken account of the feedback to improve the quality of learning.

The school's action plan is detailed with each issue broken into more manageable and measurable steps. The LA intends to work with the school to develop a new plan in the autumn. The governors are currently writing an action plan to support their improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, with a clear vision of the improvements needed and how they will be achieved.

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

- improve the school's leadership and management and instil a good working climate so that staff can work together effectively to implement change – good
- implement requirements to ensure that full background checks are made on all adults before they are cleared to work in the school – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support, particularly in securing the acting headteacher for a year. Frequent and regular visits have been made with clear and useful feedback. A recent school evaluation was followed up by a comprehensive report. The LA has provided much financial support. Governors and staff have benefited from effective support. The statement of action is good setting out a clear picture of how the school will be supported to improve. The support plan identifies how this will be achieved, with costs and timescales. The current staffing situation, with different teachers in Years 1 and 2, does not ensure the stability necessary for the pupils and should be remedied at the earliest opportunity.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Quality of LA's statement of action – good.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- As a matter of urgency, resolve the staffing situation in Years 1 and 2.
- Continue to increase the amount of teaching which is at least good.
- Make full use of information about pupils' attainment to plan work which matches the needs of all pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Devon and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Exeter.

Yours sincerely

Anne Johns
Additional Inspector