



20 October 2006

Miss Pamela Nuttall
The Headteacher
Hunters Hall Primary School
Albion Road
Dagenham
RM10 8DE

Dear Miss Nuttall

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HUNTERS HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Usha Sahni HMI, Nina Bee, and Sue Rogers, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 11 and 12 October 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 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 pupils' work. They met with the headteacher and staff, groups of pupils, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

There have been no significant changes affecting the school since becoming subject to special measures. The well established staffing remains stable.

Achievement and standards

During this monitoring visit, judgements on achievement and standards were based on lesson observations, analysis of school's test results and data, and scrutiny of a sample of pupils' recorded work.

The school is to be congratulated on a dramatic improvement shown by the 2006 end of Key Stage 2 results (unvalidated). Attainment for this cohort was well above the school's targets and the local authority average for 2005. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 was high at 48% in reading and science. However, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 and above at the end of Key Stage 1 was below the 2005 results, and showed a substantial dip in standards in reading. It is likely that, as the school believes, a strong focus on writing and intensive teaching support provided for pupils in Year 6 contributed to the significant improvement in 2006 results at the end of Key Stage 2.

In lessons observed, while pupils make satisfactory progress in English, progress in mathematics is less evident. Inspectors agree with the school that although steps have been taken to monitor pupils' achievement more systematically, important weaknesses remain in the teaching of mathematics. Underachievement in mathematics, reported at the last monitoring visit, remains a concern.

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

- raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics – satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

There were no key issues under personal development and well-being. Pupils reported that the school is improving with one pupil in Year 6 remarking that he was envious of younger children. Pupils are generally well behaved in lessons.

Quality of provision

While some progress has been made in improving lesson planning and good progress has been made in setting up systems related to target setting for different ability groups, progress is not yet evident in the quality of teaching and learning observed.

Teachers are now planning for three ability levels within their classes. However, in too many lessons the activities given to pupils are not well matched to their different needs. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged sufficiently while lower attaining pupils are given tasks that they find too difficult. Often all pupils in a class are required to do the same tasks irrespective of their ability; this results in inadequate lessons. Different groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, are not clearly identified on teachers' planning. Some teachers have misunderstood the training they have received and are not using the 'must', 'should' and 'could' levelled targets to plan appropriate learning for the different abilities within the class.

The senior leadership team has made good progress since the last inspection visit in developing effective methods for keeping track of pupils' progress using data. There are now very clear systems in place for testing and assessing pupils regularly and collating the information in class grids. The school is now able to identify which individuals or groups of pupils are underachieving. There are tables in place to show the percentages of pupils who are working at age related targets. Teachers have been made aware of the nationally expected levels of attainment for each age group and this is beginning to raise teachers' expectations of their pupils. Teachers are also able to track the rate of pupil progress at an individual level and alerts are triggered where pupils make slow progress. The data has not yet been analysed in overview form, in order to benchmark the average rate of pupil progress against national expectations.

There has also been good progress in ensuring that pupils know how to improve their own work. Targets in English and mathematics are regularly shared with pupils. They are recorded systematically both in the books and

on classroom walls and are regularly referred to in the course of lessons. As a result the pupils are generally very clear about their targets for improvement and they know where to find them. There are some examples of good marking that informs pupils what they need to do to improve. However, this is inconsistent throughout the school. Given the starting point at the time of the last visit good progress has been made in a short time in pupils knowing how to improve their work. However, this is not yet embedded in lessons and further progress will be required by the time of the next visit.

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

- Identify and plan more effectively for the pupils' individual needs - inadequate progress.
- Make more effective use of data to identify potential and actual underachievement – good progress.
- Ensure that pupils know how to improve their work – good progress.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders have continued to respond to the November 2005 report with energy and commitment to improvement. Since the last visit the form for recoding classroom observations has changed format and the use of this has enabled school leaders to build a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning.

Subject coordinators are not yet fulfilling their full responsibilities. Although they are now involved in monitoring standards in their subjects, they are not yet involved in working with teachers to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

There have been significant improvements in the school's approach to monitoring pupils' progress including the collection and use of data. However, it remains the case that this information is not being used consistently to improve the quality of pupils' learning.

Since the last visit, the school has worked hard to put in place an appropriate structure to improve pupils' progress and raise standards. The impact of these changes is not yet fully evident.

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

- Make more effective use of data to identify potential and actual under-achievement – good progress.
- Develop approaches to monitoring that are consistently rigorous, evaluative and based firmly upon measurable outcomes - satisfactory progress.
- Ensure that timely and reliable feedback from monitoring is undertaken so that everyone knows whether improvement is being secured – satisfactory progress.

External support

The local authority (LA) has worked in partnership with the school to carry out a further review of the quality of teaching. Advisory teachers for English mathematics and ICT have provided support to the subject leaders and contributed to staff training in order to help the school implement its improvement plans. The LA has provided training on lesson planning which has informed the approach throughout the school. With LA support the school is participating in Year 3 English and mathematics intervention projects.

Main Judgements

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils are appropriately challenged and achieve well.
- Further raise standards in English and mathematics across the school.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director for Education, Arts & Libraries for Barking & Dagenham.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
H M Inspector