



Ms Diana Jeuda
Chair of Governors
Oakridge Community Primary School
Coronation Avenue
Hinderwell
North Yorkshire
TS13 5HA

16 November 2006

Dear Ms Jeuda

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF OAKRIDGE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Mr M Driver, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 November 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2005.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, the headteacher of the linked primary school, groups of pupils and parents. Inspectors also met with the chair of governors and three other members of the governing body, the school's literacy and numeracy coordinators and the local authority's link adviser.

Context

A consultant headteacher took over as acting headteacher in September 2006. The headteacher remains on long-term sick leave. One of the three class teachers has also been on sick leave since September 2006, but a temporary teacher has been covering this absence. A link with a local high-achieving primary school has been formalised, with funding provided from the Department for Education and Skills, as part of the support provided to help the school move forward.

Achievement and standards

The standards of pupils' work and how well they achieve have improved significantly since the last monitoring visit. However, their achievement over time remains inadequate because of the previous weaknesses in teaching, which had meant that foundations were not sound. However, the school is 'closing the gap'. Inspectors noted also that the lack of resources for some subjects, such as mathematics, is holding up further progress.

A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that most are now making satisfactory progress, noticeably in numeracy and in writing. In the main, pupils' progress in lessons is good. This is because the teaching has improved and is now good overall. The school's leaders have made this a priority. For example, there is a valuable partnership with a successful school, where an advanced skills teacher is sharing his expertise. In addition, very thorough tracking procedures have been introduced to monitor pupils' progress. These help teachers to pitch the level of work to ensure good challenge and also allow the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to monitor progress effectively.

The school leadership has focused appropriately, initially, on improving levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy. Plans have been put into place to make significant improvements in resources for information and communication technology (ICT). Old computers are being replaced with new equipment and a wireless network of laptop computers will further improve provision. This will make it easier for the school to develop pupils' ICT skills effectively. The school has identified the need to improve teaching, learning and achievement in science.

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

- Raise standards in Years 1 to 6 – inadequate progress.

Personal development and well-being

This area was judged to be satisfactory at the time of the last inspection and it remains so. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Inspectors agree with the school's view that, 'most pupils enjoy coming to school and many now show positive attitudes'. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils commented on the improved provision for music and drama, on the visits out of school, and on the extra-curricular activities and clubs that they can join. They feel that this broadening of the curriculum provides a welcome break from the emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The school focuses well on pupils' health and safety, but some pupils expressed continuing concerns over behaviour outside at break times and the shortage of playground equipment. A school council has been established as a channel

for pupils' views and a means of involving them in decisions about what happens in school.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve. Overall the teaching is good and there is less inconsistency than previously noted. The work set is increasingly better matched to the pupils' different abilities and needs. As a result pupils usually make good progress in lessons. Where lessons are less effective this tends to be because they are not challenging enough, which means that in those lessons pupils make less progress. Some older pupils have not yet acquired sufficient skills to work independently, but the school is addressing this issue. This improvement in provision for literacy and numeracy is planned to be extended to all subjects.

Relationships between pupils and teachers have been strengthened and are now good. Pupils' work is on display, promoting a positive learning environment and giving guidance to pupils. Pupils are increasingly receiving better feedback on how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Work is marked regularly.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. Assessment has improved considerably since the last monitoring visit. There is now a school-wide system for tracking pupils' progress and all pupils have specific targets they are working towards. This system shows clearly that most pupils are making progress and some are making good progress. The end-of-term tests will provide the school with hard evidence of the levels achieved.

Good additional expertise from the link partner school has helped teachers to improve their planning for core subjects and the range of techniques they use in the classroom. Moreover, it has enabled the school to increase the opportunities for pupils in music and drama. This creative dimension to the curriculum is making a useful contribution to pupils' overall education and to their personal development. Further development in this aspect is restricted by a lack of resources.

The school has made good moves to improve resources for ICT. However, there are insufficient resources for other parts of the school curriculum, such as science, art and reading and this slows down the rate at which pupils can make progress.

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

- Build on the emerging strengths in teaching and eliminate the weaknesses so that pupils' learning is accelerated - good progress.

Leadership and management

The new acting headteacher has gained the confidence of parents and pupils. His expertise has ensured that the plans for improvement are continuing to be implemented effectively. His evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and identification of its priorities for future actions are accurate and well judged.

Governors show strong commitment to school improvement. The new chair of governors brings considerable experience to the role. Link governors have produced detailed monitoring reports on the progress made in the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Governors have a clear understanding of how the school is doing and work closely with the headteacher to implement plans for improvement.

There are coordinators for literacy and numeracy, who have a good overview of these aspects in the school and clear ideas for strategies for their further development. At present the co-ordination of science is insufficiently well developed. Moves have begun to improve leadership capability, with a view to increasing teachers' responsibility for other subjects.

The headteacher has harnessed the very good support provided through the partnership school to further improve the quality of teaching. The new systems for tracking pupils' progress and the improvements being made to the curriculum are raising the rate of learning in lessons, but the lack of resources in a number of subjects threatens to hold this up.

With the current staffing, the school has good capacity to improve further, despite the change of teacher for one class. This discontinuity has unsettled some parents, but has been well managed to minimise disruption to the pupils' education. Relationships with parents and the immediate community are much better. Parents are clear that the school is much improved and that this improvement has continued since the last inspection. They feel that communication is much better and say that they appreciate the greater range of visits and opportunities for their children to become involved locally.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels and make sure pupils are safe and happy at school- good progress.
- Improve relationships with parents and the immediate community - good progress.

External support

The local authority continues to give very good support to the school. Its statement of action has been updated. Considerable support is provided through consultancy and advice, including close monitoring of teaching quality. However, the school lacks resources to support the curriculum effectively.

The promotion of effective links with the partner school is a particular strength. This school has generously provided time and expertise to share good practice in teaching, but also to work with Oakridge on improvements to administration and to ICT. Particular help has been given to core subjects but also to widening the curriculum. The headteacher of this school continues to provide high quality consultancy support to the school.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Raise levels of achievement in Years 1 to 6.
- Refine the quality of teaching in all subjects so that all pupils make consistently good progress.
- Improve resources for the curriculum in order to support effective teaching in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Honoree Gordon
H M Inspector