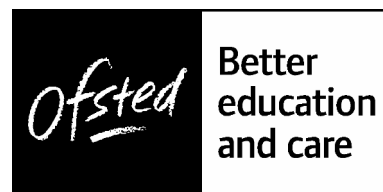


Tribal Group
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

Ofsted helpline
08456 404045
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Mrs E Stanley
The Headteacher
Whitnash Primary School
Langley Road
Whitnash
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV31 2EX

17 October 2006

Dear Mrs Stanley

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WHITNASH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 4 and 5 October 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in July 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, teachers, a group of pupils, parents, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

The school has a vacancy for the post of deputy headteacher. The local authority has assisted the school in making a temporary appointment to this post for the autumn term. The number of teaching staff has reduced by one and a half full time teachers from last term. There are now four classes, three of which have mixed year groups.

Achievement and standards

Standards at the school remain below national averages. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above at the end of Key Stage 2 shows a decline from the previous year in English and science but a slight increase in mathematics. However, a higher proportion of pupils reached Level 5 in English, mathematics and science than in previous years. Many pupils made satisfactory or good progress in Year 6 but this was insufficient to overcome the deficits in their education from previous years.

At the end of Key Stage 1 the percentages of pupils reaching Level 2 or above in reading, writing and mathematics were above the school targets. The average points scored by pupils in statutory tests were above levels achieved in the last two years at the school. The majority of pupils made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and some made good progress in English.

Pupils at higher levels of attainment and those with additional needs are being challenged and supported effectively. Pupils whose attainment is just below average need greater support to help increase their rate of progress.

The school has taken many sensible steps to raise standards and increase the progress pupils make. School records demonstrate that progress over the last year for the majority of pupils has increased from the previous year. Additional support is being directed accurately towards pupils who are not reaching their potential. Support for pupils who have experienced disrupted education in the past has increased but is not yet of sufficient intensity to make up all the lost ground.

Progress in the vast majority of lessons observed was good. Work in pupils' books showed an increase in expectations across the school and improvements were supported by helpful marking from teachers.

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

- eradicate underachievement in Years 1 to 6 – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

The positive ethos is a strength of the school. Pupils are generally supportive of one another and the older pupils provide good role models for younger children. The atmosphere in classes is purposeful and, when expectations are high, pupils are motivated to work hard. There is effective use of paired and small group work in lessons which is helping pupils to develop skills for discussing and developing ideas with their classmates. Pupils new to the school have settled into school routines quickly and those in the Reception class are able to focus on learning activities well. Pupils across the school are keen to show their work and take pride in their achievements.

Behaviour is good overall with positive relationships between staff and pupils. School council members were keen to explain the improvements in lessons and welcomed better social opportunities at lunch time.

Attendance remains satisfactory and it was pleasing to note the increase in pupils achieving 100% attendance. The school continues to work hard with families of pupils who attend less frequently.

Quality of provision

Lessons are very frequently good or better. Staff are evaluating pupils' understanding more effectively and adapt planning and lessons accordingly. This needs to be embedded further to ensure work always matches the different abilities of pupils within the class, but if additional support is required it is provided quickly. Questioning by teachers has continued to improve and there are many good examples of pupils being asked to explain their ideas to the whole class.

The new initiative encouraging pupils to assess their own work has started well and older pupils speak positively about the traffic light system as a way of gaining extra support or moving on in their work.

Teaching assistants work effectively within their assigned classes and their role is well planned by teaching staff. An increasing range of strategies using small group work and visual support is being used effectively to help pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The curriculum is now satisfactory overall. Increased monitoring ensures that pupils receive a broad and suitably balanced curriculum. There has been good progress in developing suitable long term plans to meet the needs of mixed age classes in Key Stage 2. The school has rightly identified the need to redevelop plans to meet the needs of the mixed Reception and Year 1 class to ensure good active learning opportunities and high expectations of achievement. Appropriately, single year group teaching has been established for science in order to help raise achievement. The science teaching observed during this inspection was good, with an emphasis on practical and active learning followed by accurate recording.

The school has recently improved the toilet facilities for girls and this is greatly appreciated by the pupils.

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

- ensure that teaching takes full account of pupils' differing needs – good
- rectify the weaknesses in the curriculum to ensure proper coverage of subjects – good.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is leading the school effectively, supported by high levels of commitment and hard work from all staff. Monitoring and evaluation are more regular and sufficiently rigorous to identify when interventions have been successful and when they need changing. Teachers and support staff cooperate to evaluate their work and have collectively identified sensible strategies to improve further. This team approach is a good vehicle to ensure expectations of pupils' achievements remain high and the necessary actions to address areas of concern from the past are maintained.

Evaluation of strategies used for assessment by teachers has identified accurately the main areas of focus for improvement and already actions have been taken to improve practice across the school.

The headteacher has a good understanding of the needs of pupils at the school. The new tracking system provides a tool to identify potential underachievement and, if used alongside teacher assessment, will do this quickly enough so that swift action may be taken.

Governors have a better understanding of the standards and achievement of pupils at the school and are more rigorous in their challenge to the school. There are planned monitoring visits and a focus this half term on pupils' views is appropriate. The governors are maintaining a keen focus on the improvements in teaching and learning as well as a desire to develop the role of the school in the local community.

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

- improve leadership and management and ensure that there is a concerted approach to raising standards through checking and improving provision – good.

External support

Good support has continued from the local authority and work is clearly focused. The school has been helped to develop an effective tracking tool for pupil progress which assists more rigorous evaluation. The link inspector and other professionals working with the school have provided good support for curriculum planning. Effective action has been taken to support the school by helping to provide extra staffing last term for those pupils who had received very disrupted education. There has been good forward planning to help reduce the impact of changes in deputy headteacher.

Action plans are well adapted to meet the changing needs of the school and are focused upon firmly establishing good practice. They reflect high expectations whilst ensuring there is not an overload of new initiatives.

Evaluation is effective and regular, giving the school a clear indication of progress made and areas for future focus.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the momentum of current improvements is maintained.
- Align assessment procedures so that tracking of progress is quick to identify where extra intervention is needed.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet Thompson', written in a cursive style.

Janet Thompson
H M Inspector