

20 December 2006

The Acting Headteacher
Haydn Primary School
Sherwood
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG5 2JU

Dear Mrs Puckey,

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HAYDN
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Introduction

Following my visit with Georgie Beasley and Mike Best, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 4 - 5 December 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 February 2006.

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 subject leaders for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), other staff, pupils, the vice chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

During the monitoring visit, two classes were taught by supply teachers.

Achievement and standards

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes continue to make good progress in their personal and social development. Most children reach the standards expected in all the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

Teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2006 showed that while overall they were close to the standards expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics, the proportions attaining the higher level 3 in each subject was relatively low. This year, the school's assessments indicate that standards will reach those expected and that pupils are making satisfactory progress. The proportion of pupils expected to reach level 3 is high in mathematics but low in writing. Teachers' use of targets for pupils is helping to raise standards but teachers' assessments are not always sufficiently accurate.

The school has successfully halted the decline in standards seen over the last two years. Test results at Year 6 in 2006 were higher than in the previous two years and pupils made better progress. In mathematics, standards were well above those expected nationally because of some very skilful teaching. Additionally, there were encouraging signs of improvement in the proportion of pupils working at the higher than expected level in science. Standards in English were broadly in line with the national expectations. This is partly because teachers do not make enough use of planned writing activities in other subjects. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, but girls make better progress than boys. However, progress and achievement remain inconsistent and pupils are not yet reaching their potential in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' enjoyment of school shows in their high attendance. Most pupils behave well in lessons and when playing outside with friends. In assemblies, nearly all pupils listen well because of the interesting way in which they are presented. They particularly enjoy the achievement assemblies when pupils' good work and deeds are recognised and celebrated. A wide range of assembly themes provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school's behaviour policy and procedures have been simplified so staff and pupils are clearer about what is expected of them. As a result, the headteacher is dealing with many fewer cases of unacceptable behaviour and there have been no exclusions since her appointment. However, some pupils lose concentration in lessons when the pace is too slow and there is too little to keep everyone busy. This results in them chattering too much to their friends, which further slows their progress. When given the opportunity, pupils work well with a partner or in groups, for example, when sharing the laptop computers or planning a group science investigation. Some teachers use a 'Talking Partners' system particularly effectively to draw all pupils into class discussions and so improve their attention.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve but the proportion of high quality lessons, where pupils make the best possible progress, is small. The overall management of pupils' behaviour and the use of the concluding (plenary) part of the lesson have improved but some important weaknesses remain. In particular, there is still too little emphasis in the lesson planning and teaching on ensuring that pupils' learning is as effective as possible. Teachers now track pupils' progress more closely and they have a clearer idea about the gains each pupil makes. However, this information is not used well enough to check whether some pupils' progress could be accelerated even further. Marking is still too variable and in some cases does not give pupils sufficient information to help them improve.

All teachers now set targets for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. In the best lessons they use them to plan activities to take learning forward for all ability groups and refer to them regularly during the lesson. The most effective teaching also makes pupils fully aware, from the outset, of what they are expected to learn and how they will do this. The pace is brisk and behaviour is managed well. Well chosen references to previous lessons help to capture pupils' attention and interest and carefully crafted questions focus their thinking and reflection on earlier learning. Pupils take an active part, contributing and considering ideas and solutions that help to move their learning forward. The best plenary sessions successfully highlight pupils' gains in skills, knowledge and understanding during the lesson and relate these to their earlier learning.

Two specific elements of the weaker teaching observed are a sluggish pace and work that is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly for pupils who have the capacity to make better progress. In these lessons, pupils do not fully concentrate, often chattering or distracting others rather than getting on with their work. Here, teachers are not sure what pupils are capable of achieving and, as a result, teachers are too easily satisfied.

Teaching time for lessons has been extended and fully addresses this area for improvement. Overall, pupils have access to an adequate curriculum, which now includes Spanish. The club for gifted and talented pupils also provides suitable activities for this group. Although plans for improvement are in place and some preliminary work has been completed, information and communication technology remains inadequate. The lack of modern equipment limits pupils' progress in the subject leading to low standards and not enough use is made of the equipment already in the school.

New arrangements for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities were introduced at the start of this term and are yet to be fully embedded or evaluated. Teaching assistants continue to provide good support for pupils in classes and in small groups but the quality of pupils' targets and planned action in individual education plans lacks consistency. There are suitable procedures for child protection and to ensure the health and safety of pupils.

When adults work with children in the Nursery and Reception classes on a task, learning is good. Adults give careful thought to the introduction of most new activities. However, outside activities are not well planned.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2006 and first monitoring visit:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by improving the quality of teaching and learning in the core subjects – satisfactory progress.
- Improve the breadth and balance of the curriculum – satisfactory progress.
- Improve ICT provision – inadequate progress.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has a realistic and accurate view of the school and has been pivotal in the quest for improvement. Her wealth of experience, good ideas and the capacity to organise the staff efficiently have led to the improvements to date and demonstrate a capacity for further improvement. The priorities the school is working on are the right ones. The acting headteacher has been active in many areas. For example, links with parents have improved. To strengthen these further, the school has produced a good series of leaflets and booklets that explain school policy, such as about homework and school uniform.

The largely new governing body has a suitable understanding of its duties and governors have agreed a sensible timetable to pay off the deficit budget. Appropriate links have been made between governors, subject coordinators and classes. The governing body realises that it needs to become more involved in supporting the school as a critical friend in order to improve provision.

The school's improvement plan and the LA action plan continue to support the improvement process effectively. The target for raising teaching standards, to be reached by February 2007, is ambitious and the school has some way to go. Both the school's own evaluations of teaching and the inspection's findings show that there is not yet enough good teaching to raise standards significantly.

Subject leaders have a clearer understanding of their duties and what they need to do to make improvements. However, they have a limited knowledge of some of the key information that helps to explain how pupils are performing, such as those that show the 'value added' to pupils. Teachers are benefiting from close contacts with the LA consultants, for example, in improving their subject expertise.

The school has no system for managing the performances of its staff, which is a statutory requirement. The senior posts given to teachers for extra responsibilities do not fully reflect the school's priorities and need attention. Effective monitoring is needed to evaluate the impact of changes in organisation. The accuracy of assessments of pupils' work is one such area for further work. Without accurate assessments, the tracking system cannot provide precise information for the school's leadership and teachers.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2006:

- Improve the quality of self-evaluation by focussing on the impact of the initiatives taken to raise standards – satisfactory progress.
- Improve leadership and management so that the work of the school is monitored rigorously and action taken to bring about necessary improvement - satisfactory progress.

External support

The quality of the external support provided for the school is good. The school has adopted the plan written by the LA as the basis for its school improvement plan. There is a good range of support from the LA for all five areas where the school needs to improve. The school is clearer how to plan for positive change as a result. The LA provides many useful sources of information and practice that the school uses to guide its work. The school has begun to make links with schools where there is good practice.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed

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

Yours sincerely

Roger Fry

Additional Inspector