



26 March 2007

Mrs Emma Navin
The Interim Headteacher
New Monument School
Alpha Road
Maybury
Woking
GU22 8HA

Dear Mrs Navin

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF NEW MONUMENT SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Beryl Richmond, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14 March 2007, 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 January 2006.

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 interim headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and a representative from the local authority (LA). Informal discussions were held with the chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) staff and pupils.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, a new interim headteacher has been appointed. She took up the appointment in January 2007 and works at the school full time. There have been some staff changes due to a resignation and maternity leave. Numbers in the school are rising, particularly in the Nursery.

Achievement and standards

Suitable systems of assessment are now in place. Their accuracy is improving and the work set and support offered meet pupils' needs much more effectively. However, the systems now need fine tuning and more consistent interpretation and application by class teachers, in order to ensure that the needs of each individual pupil are always fully met.

The school has made good progress in developing the computer systems for tracking and recording pupils' attainment and progress. Record-keeping for the language development of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is now fully compatible with the computerised system and new electronic record keeping is being introduced into the Foundation Stage. This will allow an easier analysis of attainment and progress and will feed into the main school's system.

The assessment coordinator has provided a useful analysis of the information to focus support for pupils. Pupils are now broadly grouped by ability for class work and a number of strategies have been instigated for given groups of pupils, for example Reading Recovery groups and booster classes for those capable of achieving higher standards given additional help.

These developments have contributed effectively to improved provision and pupils' achievement is better, particularly at Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, standards are still low throughout the school. Pupils leave the Foundation Stage with below average skills in most areas. Key Stage 1 test results continue to decline, with boys' performance being particularly low. The standards attained in the Key Stage 2 national tests, however, were higher than in previous years and furthermore, a declining trend was reversed. Nevertheless, although improved, too many more able pupils still do not reach the levels of which they are capable; this was noted in a previous monitoring visit. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties is good.

There are a number of complex reasons for these low standards and the school knows that despite the numerous improvements now in place, there is still further to go to see a sustained rise. Pupils' mobility is very high. They leave and join the school in all age groups and many of those coming in have no English at all which affects their achievement and the school's test results. The school is therefore currently considering a new strategy to give intensive support to pupils arriving with no English at all. New Monument is still suffering from the turbulence and instability of the past. Some of the current Year 6 pupils, for example, had a number of teachers during Year 5 and the quality of provision was very inconsistent. Consequently, some of these pupils have a lot of catching up to do which is likely to be reflected in the 2007 national test results. The reliability of early assessment information was inconsistent which made accurate target setting difficult. Teachers'

assessments were not previously moderated. This is now being addressed through training and external support. Finally, whilst staff are using the assessment information well to group pupils and to direct support, it is not always used well enough to accurately match work to individuals' needs within those groups. This means that a few pupils struggle, whilst others do not have sufficient challenge.

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

- Increase pupils' progress by developing suitable and accurate systems of assessment so that work matches pupils' capabilities – satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

Although children's skills are below average for their age at the end of the Foundation Stage, their disposition and attitudes are above average. This is a very good reflection of the character of New Monument pupils throughout the school. The school is racially harmonious and pupils of all heritages work and play together happily. There have been no recent reported racial incidents and pupils feel safe in school. They enjoy active playtimes and sporting activities, such as ball games, and choose healthy foods as snack options. The pupils have a very good sense of community. The improvement in attendance noted in the last monitoring visit has been sustained, and further effective measures to encourage good attendance have been introduced by the new interim head teacher.

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

- Improve attendance by reducing the proportion of authorised and unauthorised absence – good progress

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching is not as strong as at the time of the last visit. In effective lessons, teaching is lively and brisk. Work is well matched to individuals' needs at class, group and individual level as a result of good use of assessment information. Lessons are tightly structured and planning is very detailed and outlines the differing provision for the different groups, including recent arrivals to the school. Questioning is well targeted so that pupils of differing capabilities are properly challenged and the teacher can assess how well individuals have learned. There is good emphasis on speaking and listening, and on developing pupils' independence and creativity. Where lessons are less effective, although grouped broadly by ability or need, work is not always carefully matched to individuals' capabilities within the group. Opportunities are sometimes lost to make the most of every situation for learning. For example, in an effective English lesson the pupils were asked to

write a short note in their own words to a mystery creature which was hiding behind a curtain, after an example had been modelled on the white board. In an unsatisfactory lesson, all pupils were asked to copy the same text from a printed worksheet.

The curriculum is becoming increasingly practical and based on active experiences, often through the good use of the interactive whiteboards. This supports pupils at the early stages of learning English and those with learning difficulties. It also provides a more motivating approach to learning in general which meets the needs of the New Monument pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a number of after school clubs, participation in community events and visits. The curriculum developments and interventions such as Reading Recovery continue to provide good support for pupils with various identified needs. The Foundation Stage classrooms provide rich support for the planned curriculum in the required areas of learning, and most classrooms in the school have their walls covered in a wealth of helpful support for pupils' reading, writing and number skills.

The pupils are very well cared for and safeguarding is good. The school's refreshed approach to assessing pupils' skills and progress means that they are given good guidance and support for learning if they have particular needs, such as learning difficulties or under-developed reading skills. However, staff still need to get to grips with using the assessment information to provide suitable work and guidance for individuals in everyday class groups. Examples are to challenge the higher attaining pupils or to make sure that all pupils who are asked to work independently actually understand the concepts involved.

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

- Improve teaching with lessons which have good pace and tasks matched to pupils' abilities and their level of fluency in English – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

The leadership of the school has been handed over successfully to the second interim headteacher. In the past year, the systems and practices needed for the school to run efficiently have been put into place. All the key issues have been very effectively addressed through the work of the first interim headteacher, the leadership team and the Interim Executive Board (now the Governing Body). The staff have been involved fully and have embraced the changes willingly. The focus of the work of the second interim head teacher is to carefully monitor and evaluate the systems and practices, to make sure that they are working properly, are consistently implemented and are having a sustained, positive impact on pupils' achievement.

The responsibility for the achievement of pupils with EAL has been devolved successfully to class staff. However, the impact of the new arrangements has not yet been systematically evaluated in order to plan further improvements. Good consideration is being given to a strategy to provide intensive, short-term support for new arrivals to school who have no English, in order to help them more effectively.

The position of almost all the staff members on long-term absence has been clarified and the stability of senior staff has improved. The post of substantive headteacher has been advertised, and the deputy head's post is due to be advertised at the beginning of next term. The new leadership team is taking more management responsibility, and all staff are being encouraged to play a role in the management and development of the school. This makes the leadership and management of the school much less vulnerable to the effect of staff changes and improves the school's ability to maintain the developments and improve further.

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

- Stabilise its leadership and management to ensure that key weaknesses identified in this report are addressed effectively – good progress
- Develop a suitable and viable staffing structure to meet the diverse linguistic needs of pupils – satisfactory progress

External support

The school continues to receive good support from the LA who are appropriately involved in providing external support and guidance to improve the quality of provision, and in relation to the appointment of the second interim head teacher. They are also playing an appropriate role in the appointment of the substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher and in working with staff who are absent in the long-term.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not yet be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Make sure that staff assess pupils' levels of attainment accurately, and interpret and use assessment data to match work closely to individuals' needs
- Monitor the effectiveness of the devolved provision for pupils with EAL in terms of impact on their achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director for Schools for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

Judith Charlesworth
Additional Inspector