



08 February 2007

Miss Von Smith
The Headteacher
John Perryn Primary School
Long Drive
Acton
London
W3 7PD

Dear Miss Smith

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF JOHN PERRYNS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Anastasia Savva, Additional Inspector and Susan Thomas-Pounce, Additional Inspector, to your school on 30 and 31 January 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in July 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 headteacher, other teachers, four representatives of the local authority (LA) who have been working closely with the school and the chair of governors. Informal discussions were held with pupils.

Context

The headteacher at the time of the inspection in July 2006 has left. An experienced headteacher who was working in the school in a consultative capacity on behalf of the LA has taken on the headship for the next three years. The deputy headteacher is on sick leave.

The school is to be rebuilt. It will be a staged process, due for completion in 2009.

Achievement and standards

Appropriate steps are being taken to lay the foundations for improvements in the pupils' progress in order to raise standards. All of the pupils have taken non-statutory tests and the results have been compiled in a database. This means that the teachers have accurate information about the pupils' current levels of attainment in English and mathematics which they can use as a basis for planning. They are also better placed to measure future progress. Teachers are being helped to improve their skills and to raise their expectations of what the pupils are capable. The LA is providing a high degree of support for teachers in order to establish common approaches to planning and assessment, improve the use of technology in lessons and to broaden the range of teaching methods. The range of resources for mathematics, which was seriously lacking, has been increased and attention has been given to the mental and oral starters to lessons. In English, work has concentrated on better teaching of phonic skills and strengthening teachers' understanding of levels of attainment in writing. A considerable amount of money is to be spent to make sure that every pupil is able to take home a book to read with their family. These actions have the potential to improve teaching and learning, and to raise standards.

At the moment, however, the impact of the actions is not showing strongly in lessons. The pupils are not yet making enough progress and are not building successfully on what they already know and can do. The LA has provided extensive support to set up the tracking system so that progress can be carefully monitored, but work has been hindered because the person responsible for this aspect of the school's work is absent.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics – satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

This was found to be an area of relative strength at the school's inspection in July 2006. Strengths have been maintained; the pupils' behaviour is generally good and they are willing learners even when faced with mediocre teaching. They are keen to talk about what they have been doing and to share their work. The school building is grim and has been neglected for many years.

The headteacher has initiated much needed improvements to the environment in order to promote the pupils' well-being. New boys' toilets are being installed and outdoor areas enhanced, for example. There are plans to give the pupils more of a voice in the school and a school council is to be set up.

Attendance levels have improved and are ahead of the target for the year. Particular successes have been made with Traveller pupils. The headteacher has visited the Traveller site and has begun to build bridges with that part of the local community. This has also resulted in many new enrolments, especially in the Foundation Stage.

Quality of provision

Important steps have been taken to improve teaching and learning, but while some improvement is evident there has not yet been a sustained impact. The school still has a long way to go before teaching is consistently satisfactory. Nevertheless, good features show in the teaching in some classes as teachers put what they have learned into practice. LA consultants have modelled good teaching and all teachers have visited other schools to observe good lessons, but the school lacks an internal role model to guide the teachers. Improving the quality of teaching is crucial if the pupils' learning and the standards they achieve are to get better.

Action has been taken to bring about consistency in timetabling and the way teachers plan their lessons. Teachers are expected to show how they will meet the needs of all pupils and to make sure that they identify and distinguish between the support required for pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language. All teachers now use the agreed planning format, but their ability to cater for the range of different needs is not yet secure.

Good features which are beginning to show include: a better match between what pupils are asked to do and their prior knowledge and capabilities; effective management of the pupils; the use of suitable resources and sensitive input from teaching assistants. Weaknesses remain in: some teachers' subject knowledge; their ability to plan so that pupils build on what they already know; confusing explanations; muddled questioning; and insufficient support, such as word banks or prompts, which means that pupils cannot get on with their work without an adult. Although teachers mark the pupils' work they do not routinely give guidance on how they could improve. There is also a heavy reliance on worksheets which limits the opportunities pupils have to improve their presentation skills and practise different ways of writing.

Regular observations of lessons have given the headteacher a secure knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Weaknesses are being tackled robustly.

There have been some improvements to the curriculum in order to ensure that the pupils experience what they are entitled to. After-school activities have grown in number and more are to be added. The school is rightly concentrating on improving teaching and learning in English and mathematics before taking further action on the curriculum as a whole.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving provision for pupils who have learning difficulties. The 'Catch Up' programme has brought about pleasing results in achievement in reading. Teachers now work more closely with the coordinator to identify targets for pupils who have individual educational plans, and the pupils themselves are becoming more involved in this process. The coordinator has been enabled to play a more prominent role in the school and use her skills to better effect.

Improvements in provision for pupils learning English is the focus for work this term. The impact will be evaluated at the next monitoring inspection.

The school has made sure that statutory checks on staff and governors have been carried out and that records are collected and held in a single database. Steps have also been taken to address health and safety issues, for example, the installation of fire doors, a thorough cleaning of the whole school, and weeding out of clutter.

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

- Improve the assessment of pupils' performance and its effective use by teachers in planning challenging work for more able pupils – satisfactory progress
- Ensure there is adequate support for pupils with learning difficulties – satisfactory progress
- and for those who do not have English as their home language – not inspected on this visit

Leadership and management

The interim headteacher has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school. She has achieved the difficult task of raising morale while making clear to staff exactly where improvements are needed. A

new staffing structure has been drawn up, supported by detailed job descriptions. This makes lines of accountability clear and distributes leadership roles sensibly. It will be implemented in September. The school's plan for improvement contains appropriate actions which are suitably paced over the year. Many processes are new and not yet part and parcel of school life.

The headteacher is having to shoulder a large burden herself. Long-standing weaknesses in the way the school was organised mean that middle managers are not yet accountable for standards and the quality of education in their subjects. Not all staff with management responsibilities have the skills to ensure that good practice is shared and teaching and learning are regularly checked. Nevertheless, post holders show enthusiasm and a desire to do their best for the pupils and some are beginning to grow and develop rapidly under the headteacher's leadership.

The headteacher has successfully managed an unsettling period of transition which has included the continuing absence of the deputy headteacher. Although this has meant that the timing of some the actions taken to tackle weaknesses has slipped a little, the headteacher has initiated a range of changes that are shaping the educational direction of the school. However, she lacks additional support at senior management level to challenge and work with teachers as they develop classroom practice.

The addition of new members has strengthened the governing body. Governors' understanding of their role in holding the school to account is growing.

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

- Ensure that staff are able to contribute effectively to the management of the school, including their responsibility for leading subjects – satisfactory progress

External support

The LA's statement of action is good and sets out clearly the steps that will be taken to bring about improvement as quickly as possible. The LA was providing the school with support prior to the special measures judgement, but its efforts were resisted by the school's leaders. Now that the climate within the school has changed and is positive, the LA is able to work more effectively towards its targets for the school. The quality of support has been excellent. There is a recognition that the key to improvement is effective

leadership and management and the appointment of the interim headteacher has been pivotal, already bringing significant benefits to the school.

LA consultants and advisers are working closely with the staff and are having a discernible impact, for example in setting up systems and structures which were lacking and helping teachers to develop their skills as classroom practitioners. Weaknesses in the educational provision are now more widely acknowledged in the school and support to address them is being well received. The LA is managing to balance urgency with the need to make sure that change is manageable and that staff are not overwhelmed. LA and school staff understand, however, that they are starting from a very low base. The school has also benefited from support from other schools in Ealing.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill
H M Inspector