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Mrs B Herszenhorn
The Headteacher
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Burns Street
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Dear Mrs Herszenhorn

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CHADSMOOR CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Charlotte Roberson, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10 and 11 January 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 December 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 and senior staff, the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

There have been no significant changes in the school's context since the last visit.

Achievement and standards

At the time of the last visit the school had just introduced a new tracking system which enabled it to monitor the progress children were making from year to year. National guidance has been followed in setting each child challenging targets based upon their Key Stage 1 national test results. Tracking each child's progress against their targets showed, at the last visit, that around one third of children were underachieving in English and around a half in mathematics.

The tracking system has since been further refined and can now show the progress children make term by term. There has been a marked improvement in the progress now made by a majority of children. The national expectation is that each child will progress two National Curriculum sub-levels during a school year. Around one third of children at the school progressed one National Curriculum sub-level last term in writing, reading and mathematics. Another third of children progressed three sub-levels in their reading, writing and mathematics, which is the equivalent of one whole National Curriculum level in just one term. This is solid evidence that children identified as underachieving by the school are catching up fast. Overall, children made good progress last term and this was confirmed during lessons observed by inspectors. Although children are catching up it is still early days and there is still a long way for them to go. Standards overall remain below average.

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

- raise expectations across the school by giving more weight to the results of Key Stage 1 tests – good.

Expectations have now been successfully raised across the school. Future visits will no longer monitor this area for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Children are well behaved, polite and friendly. They relate well to each other and to adults. They have positive attitudes towards school and to learning. Children of all ages want to do well and are very motivated in lessons where extra challenges are provided for them. Levels of attendance remain good. Personal development and well-being continue to be a real strength of the school.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning is good. During this visit, for the first time, one lesson was judged outstanding. In the best lessons seen children made good or better progress because the teachers had high expectations, had planned carefully to meet all needs, used time and resources well, but

above all made learning fun. Children were on task and understood exactly what they needed to do and why. They helped each other and relationships between children were good. All teachers plan thoroughly and carefully using assessment and tracking information from newly implemented systems. They ensure activities are adjusted in difficulty to match children's differing starting points. Lessons are well structured with a good balance between children 'listening' and 'doing'. Learning objectives are fully explained. Teachers are good at summarising with their classes what has been learnt.

Teaching assistants are more closely involved now in planning and assessing groups of children with learning difficulties and disabilities as well as supporting them in lessons. Since September, children who have been identified as underachieving are catching up at a faster rate because teaching is more precisely directed at improving weaknesses and because children are better motivated. Smaller class sizes and more setting in Years 5 and 6 are also helping teachers teach more effectively. The extra support the school is now giving its children is good. They are becoming more independent learners as a result.

Every child now has a folder setting out their individual targets for each subject. Children can explain what they need to do to progress to the next sub-level. Teachers refer to these folders within lessons and children told inspectors that they like this new system. Children's National Curriculum sub-levels and targets have been shared with parents.

The curriculum has been modified to give more time to mathematics. The extra time is used to engage children in mathematical games which are fun and capture their interest. Early indications show that children in Year 6, who began the extra lessons in September, have made rapid gains in their understanding of mathematics.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by inspectors in December 2005:

- improve the quality of teaching by ensuring activities are better matched to the pupils' level of understanding – good.

Leadership and management

The school has moved swiftly and effectively to tackle the priorities for improvement identified at the last monitoring visit. The school now has good systems and processes in place which are bringing about clear improvements. All children are now aware of their current National Curriculum levels and what they need to do to improve. The school has held information evenings which have set out for parents which levels their children are at, the levels they ought to reach, and how parents can help their children get there. This has been warmly welcomed by parents. Teaching and learning have improved

because they are more directly focused on moving each child to the next sub-level.

Monitoring of all aspects of the school's work is detailed and rigorous. Consequently, the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and the quality of its self-evaluation is good. Senior staff review the progress of each class half termly to check that the extra support for children identified as underachieving is helping them catch up quickly enough. The staff of the school have pulled together and worked hard to bring about these good improvements. They recognise that further improvement requires them to sustain and consolidate the gains made last term.

The governors' strategy group regularly and more rigorously monitors the progress the school is making. Governors now have a clear understanding of the improvements the school has made and its future priorities.

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

- improve the quality of leadership and management by making monitoring and evaluation more rigorous in identifying weaknesses and pursuing improvement – good.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide good support to the school. Consultants have worked with subject leaders to introduce new systems and processes. The school has been supported in increasingly managing the new approaches itself although it still has ready access to advice should it need it. The headteacher has direct access to the LA district inspector and additional advice from a consultant headteacher. Support from the LA continues to have a good impact on helping the school develop the capacity to improve by itself.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

Inspectors have identified no priorities crucial to the school's further development

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Lichfield and the Director of Children's Services and Lifelong Learning for Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

David Anstead
H M Inspector