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Ms A Bufton
The Headteacher
Anderton Park Primary School
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Dear Ms Bufton

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ANDERTON PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Mary Usher-Clark and Martin James, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 26 and 27 March 2007, 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 March 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, deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers, the Primary Strategy manager, the Excellence and Enjoyment manager, the science coordinator, the office manager, the chair of governors, groups of pupils, and a representative of the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the first monitoring visit, six teachers including the acting deputy headteacher and one of the assistant headteachers have left the school. A substantive deputy headteacher has taken up her post. An advanced skills teacher has been appointed and a Primary Strategy manager has joined the

school for the spring and summer terms 2007. Nine out of 33 teaching posts are currently filled by supply staff.

Achievement and standards

The school rightly judges that there has been inadequate progress in raising standards and improving achievement. The school's own assessment data shows that the majority of pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6. However, there are still too many pupils who are not making as much progress as they could in these year groups. The school acknowledges that its assessment data for pupils in other year groups has been unreliable and has implemented strategies to address this.

Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in lessons and, in the better lessons, many make good progress. Work in pupils' books indicates that most pupils are now making satisfactory progress. However, the gaps between what pupils are attaining and what they are capable of are still not closing quickly enough.

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

- raise standards and improve achievement for all groups of pupils in English, mathematics and science, by raising teacher expectations of what pupils can do – inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils relate well to each other and to the many adults they come into contact with. They display positive attitudes to their work, although occasionally a small number of pupils continue with the tasks they have been set, rather than paying attention to their teacher. The school has been very successful in raising levels of attendance, which are now close to the national average.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve since the last monitoring visit. The majority of lessons are now at least satisfactory. However, there is still not enough good teaching to address the gaps in pupils' learning and accelerate the progress made by learners. The collaborative approach to planning is contributing to an improved range of suitable learning activities. However, in too many lessons, teachers are not taking sufficient account of pupils' individual needs. Planned activities do not always provide adequate challenge for each pupil.

In the best lessons, teachers share clear expectations with their pupils. Activities frequently have specific time limits and pupils respond well. Lessons move on at a brisk pace and most pupils make good progress. However, time is not always managed so effectively. The pace of learning in some lessons is too slow because pupils are required to listen for long periods of time and have little opportunity to talk with each other. On other occasions, activities are rushed, providing too little time for pupils to reflect on their learning or for teachers to take account of the learning needs of the individual pupils.

Pupils' learning in science is improving as lessons now include more practical activities. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills and use of data.

Although the marking of pupils' work has improved since the last monitoring visit the quality is still inconsistent. At its best, work is marked accurately and pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve. As a result, pupils make good progress. However, too much marking is still not good enough to enable pupils to move on in their learning quickly enough.

The school has implemented a system of setting targets for groups of pupils in each class. However, these targets are not well enough matched to pupils' individual abilities and are not reviewed frequently enough to provide sufficient guidance to help pupils improve. The school has been particularly successful in involving parents and carers in their children's learning. Their involvement in consultations and target setting meetings is a positive development.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing engaging tasks appropriate for all year groups and improving the use of assessment data to move pupils on in their learning – satisfactory
- improve the care, guidance and support for all pupils by ensuring that they are fully aware of what they need to do to improve their learning – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The school is led and managed by a skilled senior leadership team under the direction of the highly focused headteacher. All members of the team have clearly defined roles and sensible lines of accountability have been established. For example, the work of the coordinators of English, mathematics and science is overseen by one of the assistant headteachers. The high level of professional respect and the very good working relationships are strengths of the school.

All members of the senior leadership team play an active role in the comprehensive programme of activities to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. They meet together regularly and talk openly. As a result, they all have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. These are reported frankly to the governing body and the LA, enabling the governing body to hold the school to account and the LA to manage its support for the school effectively.

The formal programme of monitoring and evaluation is supplemented by frequent and effective informal activities. Weekly monitoring by senior staff is clearly focused and provides teachers with very helpful and practical suggestions through succinct weekly reports. This relentless approach to incremental improvement has been a significant contributory factor in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Monitoring and evaluation activities are now carried out by a wide range of school staff and this is a sensible development. Senior leaders have benefited from carrying out joint observations with the LA. However, not all lesson observations are sufficiently focused on the progress made by pupils. As a result, the feedback that teachers receive is not always as helpful as it could be. Too many feedback reports are not sufficiently evaluative and it is not always clear how lesson judgements have been made. The school has improved its monitoring of pupils' work with the addition of 'specific areas for improvement' included routinely in the feedback reports. Each new report begins with a review of these, helping the school to hold its teachers to account for their work in improving the progress that pupils make.

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

- improve the leadership and management of the school by: ensuring that the headteacher and deputy headteacher establish a rigorous, strategic approach to help raise standards; improving teamwork throughout the school to raise morale; deploying support staff effectively and developing the role of the governing body to ensure that it receives sufficient information about pupils' underachievement – satisfactory.

External support

The school works well with the local authority to manage the good support that it provides. This is carefully targeted through the Intensifying Support Programme, staff training sessions, and guidance for individual teachers from literacy and numeracy consultants. These initiatives have all contributed to the improvements in teaching and learning.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since the previous monitoring visit – satisfactory.

A maximum of two newly qualified teachers may be appointed on condition that they are mentored by a member of the senior leadership team and that they are in different year groups.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Learning and Culture for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby
Her Majesty's Inspector