

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancashire Investment Centre
Maple View
White Moss Business Park
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Direct Tel 01695 566930
Direct Fax 01695 729320

Email-inspectionsservices@cfbt.com
www.ofsted.gov.uk



22 June 2007

Mrs D Mann
Headteacher
Grimes Dyke Primary School
Stanks Drive
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS14 5BY

Dear Mrs Mann

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Grimes Dyke Primary School

Introduction

Following my visit with Linda Murphy, Additional Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 June 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 October 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 lessons, and examined documentation and samples of pupils' work. Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, an additional governor and representatives from Education Leeds.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit a new Reception teacher has been appointed for September 2007. Three members of the teaching staff in Key Stage 2 are leaving at the end of July 2007. Currently the school has only been able to recruit a teacher for the Year 6 class from September 2007, leaving two posts yet to be filled. In addition, the Nursery teacher is retiring at the end of July 2007 and the school has not been successful in finding a replacement. Recruitment difficulties for the school remain a concern.

Achievement and standards

Although underachievement still remains, especially at upper Key Stage 2, there are indications that all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are improving in their basic skills. The number of pupils in each year group working at the National Curriculum level appropriate for their age is increasing. The school's data is showing improvements in the rates of progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics but the picture is uneven. The strategies to improve boys' achievement are working: boys are now making at least similar or better progress than girls across all year groups. In Key Stage 1 the accelerated progress is more consistent across the different classes than in Key Stage 2. In Year 2, there has been marked progress, particularly in mathematics and writing. These pupils have moved on swiftly and the recent teacher assessments show an improvement in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 when compared to the 2006 results. In Year 6 underachievement and low standards remain because these pupils have not had time to make up the gaps in their learning. The school's tracking system continues to be improved and now provides detailed information about how well individual pupils and groups of pupils are progressing. The information is used well to target those pupils who are not making sufficient progress and provide them with additional support. Pupils in Year 5 have made rapid progress in reading and writing this year and, as a result, their statutory targets for the end of Year 6 in 2008 have been reviewed and set at an increased level of challenge. Staff's knowledge and use of assessment information have improved since the last inspection. They are becoming more reflective on their own teaching and increasingly accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes.

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

- Raise achievement, particularly that of boys, in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Improved arrangements, including closer liaison with families, are helping the school make headway in raising attendance and tackling pupils' behaviour. Pupils and their families are progressively more aware of the importance of attendance through the school's close monitoring. The education welfare officer lends good support. As a result the rate of attendance has improved from 92.7% in 2005 -2006 to 93.5% in the same period in 2006 -2007. Older pupils are making sound gains in that they, 'realise the importance of working hard' so that they can do well in their next school.

The behaviour of most pupils is improving, although for a minority of older boys it remains unsatisfactory. Exclusion has declined by about a third and those pupils with great difficulties in managing their behaviour receive good help from the pupil support worker, who helps to defuse situations and to motivate pupils to want to do well in their lessons. The prompt contact with parents and the helpful support from them if a child wastes time and misbehaves are proving effective in improving pupils'

attitudes and behaviour. Pupils report that the lessons are 'calmer' and 'happier'. The school continues to provide enrichment for older pupils, such as the residential visit for Year 5 and a musical production by Year 6 to promote pupils' belief in themselves and raise wider aspirations.

A start has been made in widening the horizons of parents by the introduction of a course to build parents' confidence in facing new opportunities. Many of the systems for monitoring attendance are well established, which should now leave the learning mentor more time to focus on this type of support for families so that ambitions for the pupils can be extended.

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

- Raise pupils' aspirations so that they want to attend school and believe that by attending they have the best possible chance to do well – satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Several successful steps have been taken to improve the quality of teaching since the last monitoring inspection. In the main teaching is based on sound planning. Teachers are conscientious in preparing weekly plans and these are regularly monitored alongside pupils' progress towards their targets. This helps to hasten pupils' learning.

Features of the effective teaching include good relationships which result in pupils being willing to share their thoughts and feelings. Questioning is good and makes the pupils think hard. Pupils' increasing willingness to respond contributes to the discussion of their work and helps to develop their speaking skills. Pupils are mostly clear about what it is they are to learn because teachers frequently refer to the learning objectives. Expertise is developing in using success criteria to help pupils judge their progress. This is an improvement since the last monitoring inspection.

Marking has also improved. It mostly identifies how well pupils are doing and what they need to do next. Teachers have yet to ensure that pupils act upon the marking to improve their work.

Inconsistency in quality remains and this leads to unevenness in the pupils' achievement. There are still lessons where learning is unduly limited as a result of weaknesses in the teaching. This is particularly so in literacy at Key Stage 2, where teaching does not always fully engage the pupils or provide sufficient challenge or pace. Teaching styles are sometimes limited, reducing pupils' enjoyment in learning and the pace at which they work. The use of highly controlled discussion, for example, maintains the direction of work but at high cost in terms of slow pace. The programme for teaching literacy is not being adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of children in the Foundation Stage.

In a few lessons at Key Stage 2 a small number of boys have great difficulty in managing their behaviour and at times refuse to engage in learning. The time taken to deal with this group often slows the pace of work for all pupils in the class. It diverts the teacher from working in the way they planned.

At best the deployment of teaching assistants and the contribution they make to pupils' learning are good and provide pupils with additional teaching and guidance, as in a numeracy lesson in Year 2 when pupils made good gains in solving mathematical problems by applying their earlier learning. In some classes, however, too little is expected of teaching assistants and the benefit to pupils' learning is negligible.

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

- Improve the consistency of teaching quality to provide all pupils with the right levels of support and challenge so that they can learn to the best of their ability – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection a joint review of teaching and learning has taken place with representatives of Education Leeds. This has led to an increased focus on improving the quality of learning when monitoring lessons. However, systems to ensure that consistent gains are made on the identified areas for improvement are insufficiently robust and this limits their impact. Staff welcome the constructive feedback about the quality of their teaching and this is helping them to evaluate their own practice. Programmes of support for specific teachers experiencing difficulties are helping to improve the quality of learning and their management of pupils' behaviour. External support to the Foundation Stage is providing guidance in improving the accuracy of assessing children's attainment but there is more to be done.

The accountability of senior leaders and other key staff in monitoring performance is improving, but the reports produced by the subject leaders for English and mathematics are not evaluative enough in terms of raising achievement. The deputy headteacher has continued to improve the system for tracking pupils' progress. This is giving a clear picture of pupils' attainment and progress across the school. More effective action is now being taken when pupils are not meeting targets. Some detailed analysis has taken place to identify underachievement and to pinpoint precise support to accelerate progress. This is resulting in more challenging targets being set.

The recently appointed additional governors have made a positive start in assessing the work of the governing body. It is, however, too soon for them to have had any influence in developing the governors' role in monitoring the school's performance and holding it to account.

The recruitment of staff is a major issue for the leadership to tackle. It is important that whole-school policies, such those on marking and teaching and learning, are implemented by the current staff to ensure a consistency of practice as new staff take up their appointments. The leadership will also have increased management responsibilities as the school gains Children's Centre status from September 2007. During this time of considerable additional pressure it will be essential that the school receives maximum external support to help it to maintain the current momentum of school improvement.

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

- Widen management so that more staff take greater leadership and management responsibilities and allow senior management time to be used more effectively– satisfactory.

External support

Education Leeds continues to give extensive support provided from advisers, personnel and consultants and this has been well directed at the school's needs. Since the last monitoring inspection the officers have undertaken a formal review of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and provided support to strengthen the role of the governing body in monitoring the work of the school.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures– satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

The issues identified in the inspection of October 2006 remain the most important priorities for the school. The issues identified in the first visit, particularly the one related to improving the monitoring of teaching so that it is sharply focused on improving pupils' learning, can be subsumed within the main key issues.

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

Yours sincerely

Brenda McIntosh
Additional Inspector