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Mrs Anne Parker
Acting Headteacher
Brockhurst Junior School
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Gosport
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Dear Mrs Parker

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BROCKHURST JUNIOR SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Lily Evans and David White, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 9 and 10 May 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 November 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 acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other staff, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA). An assembly, 16 lessons or parts of lessons and a number of additional activities were observed. The observations of lessons took place in all year groups.

Context

The headteacher is currently absent from school due to ill-health. His duties are being carried out by an acting headteacher, who took up her post on March 18th. The chair of governors has resigned and been replaced by the vice-chair.

Achievement and standards

Standards in the school are rising now due to the introduction and more consistent use of assessment and tracking procedures. The carefully collated information shows improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. Forecasts based on this information show Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve the school's own well-defined targets and in line with expectations for their age in reading, mathematics and science in the forthcoming national tests. Attainment in writing is still lower than in other subjects and is a whole-school priority for improvement.

Standards in lessons are broadly in line with age-related expectations. Progress in lessons is mostly good and occasionally very good. This improvement in progress since the inspection in November is mainly due to the introduction of short and succinct learning objectives that are now clearly understood by all pupils. However, the opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills in other subjects could still be enhanced.

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

- Raise achievement and standards in writing and mathematics, by improving the use of assessment information to plan work that challenges all pupils – satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The pupils' attitudes to their learning and their behaviour in class and around the school are good. A particular strength in the school is the quality of relationships between all concerned. Pupils feel safe because of the positive support they receive from adults and their peers. The work of the home-school link worker is particularly effective. Pupils enjoy learning. They take their responsibilities to the school community seriously, whether it is as a member of the school council, the 'Enterprise Board' or by being 'buddies' to help their peers. The systems employed to improve attendance have had a positive impact so that in the spring term authorised and unauthorised absence were better than the national averages. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be good. The pupils' involvement in the tuck shop and their keen participation in physical activities show that they have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Quality of provision

The overall quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. In the 16 lessons, or part of lessons, observed, teaching was satisfactory in 4, good in 8 and outstanding in 4. There is now a high proportion of good or better teaching.

The improvement in observed lessons is because they are now characterised by planning which takes careful account of the pupils' varying needs and how to assess

their learning. Staff in discussion also identified this improvement. Lesson objectives are now always clear and shared with the pupils. The most effective lessons featured well-structured activities including independent work, group or whole-class teaching. Exposition was clear and there were plenty of opportunities for the pupils to contribute their views. Teachers built skilfully on earlier learning often through well targeted questioning. Time was used purposefully; cross-curricular links were well integrated into the activities; there was a positive ethos for learning; attractive displays were used to support learning; work was matched to the different needs of the pupils, and praise was used to acknowledge their achievements. In the most effective lessons, teachers adopted a range of strategies to ensure that the pupils were involved from the outset. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher's high expectations were clear to the pupils who throughout were able to justify their answers and the progress they had made. Good use was made of resources to support learning in lessons and, on most occasions, activities were provided at different levels to challenge all of the pupils appropriately. In almost all lessons seen pupils were asked to evaluate their own work. Pupils are responding well to this effective new strategy.

Support and guidance for the pupils is now good overall. The introduction of a new marking system not only supports pupils, but sets up a dialogue that enables them to know what to do next in order to improve. The systems for collecting assessment data, tracking the pupils' performance and setting targets in mathematics and English are now good. Although these systems are now good and monitor the progress pupils make and the quality of teaching and learning with a sharp focus, many are new and it is too soon to see the full impact on pupils' achievement and whether it will lead to sustained improvement.

The curriculum is well balanced and stimulates an enjoyment for learning for all. Good provision is made for information and communication technology. Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy learning through lively and interesting themed days, such as that on the Tudors that the pupils still remember well. The school makes good use of visits, visitors and residential visits to enrich learning and pupils' personal development. There is a good range of well attended after school activities. The school successfully promotes pupils' knowledge of staying healthy and safe.

Provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good. The quality of the pupils' individual education plans is good and learning targets are particular to each pupil and are appropriately reviewed.

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

- Ensure that the curriculum is planned to make the best use of time and meet the learning needs of all pupils – good progress
- Rigorously monitor the progress pupils make and the quality of teaching and learning, so that any action taken can be more sharply focused and lead to sustained improvement – good progress

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has made a very significant contribution to the progress the school has made in the last two months. She has galvanised the committed leadership team, who now have a clear view of necessary improvements and have made a good start in implementing them. The use of assessment across the school to set targets for the school, year groups and individuals is now enabling the team to measure, analyse and monitor progress and standards. This has highlighted areas for action such as reorganising Year 6 into smaller groups for literacy and numeracy, which, in discussion, the pupils themselves enthusiastically endorsed. Information gained from the monitoring of these pupils shows encouraging progress, an early indication of the success of this strategy. There are now systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, with very clear and effective mentoring and support systems. The school has identified as a priority the need to enable subject leaders to take an active part in monitoring the effectiveness of practice in their subjects. The evidence of the recent changes, and the current positive measures of their effectiveness, show that the school, led by the current team, is well placed to continue the improvement process.

External support

The LA has made a good range of support available to the school throughout the last term. The actions proposed in the LA's statement of action have been very well implemented and LA staff are collaborating effectively with the school to facilitate the transition in overall leadership and to support the work of all staff. The LA monitors the school effectively and its support work is well co-ordinated.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Provide further opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills in other subjects.
- Make sure the improvement in the way teachers use assessments to help them plan tasks that better match the needs and abilities of the pupils is secure and embedded.
- Provide opportunities for managers to monitor the teaching and learning in the subjects that are their responsibility.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Additional Inspector