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27 June 2007

Mr K Purbhoo
The Head of Area A PRU
Area A - PRU South - Chichester
Fletcher Place
Chichester
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PO20 1JR

Dear Mr Purbhoo

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Area A - PRU South -
Chichester

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 14 and 15 June 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 February 2007.

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

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the head of the PRU, heads of the Area A PRU centres; head of Area B PRU, staff, and chair of the management committee; head of out of schools service; and a representative of the local authority (LA). Pupils were visited in both the Area A centres (the 39 Club and North Mundham) and the Area B centre, and parts of 6 lessons were seen.

Context

The Area A PRU does not have provision for primary- aged pupils. The very small number of pupils of primary age is educated at a primary PRU in Area B. The LA is in the process of trying to find a suitable site to base a class for these pupils in Area A.

Building work has started to improve the accommodation at North Mundham and is planned to be completed by the start of next term.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievements remain unsatisfactory overall. A satisfactory start has been made in assessing the pupils' levels of attainment when they start at the PRU and data is being collected to enable the heads of each centre to track the progress they are making. At the North Mundham centre, assessments on entry have been started but the ongoing assessments of pupils are not secure and do not yet enable staff to check how well they are doing. Evidence provided shows that pupils are not making the progress they should and achievement is unsatisfactory. There is clear evidence that for those primary pupils educated at the Area B PRU, progress is good. For those pupils with medical and health issues educated at the 39 Club, progress is generally satisfactory. It is good in English but achievements in mathematics and science are less secure.

A spreadsheet has been established that will enable the leadership team to have an overall understanding of the progress of pupils across the PRU and track pupils' progress, but data has not been entered. The lack of a suitable computerised system which would enable senior staff to analyse data is a further hindrance.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2

- assess pupils' attainment on entry to the PRU and track their progress to ensure that staff are able to support and challenge appropriately – inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development remains satisfactory. The youngest pupils show pleasure on their arrival to the Area B PRU and quickly settle. They have a good understanding of how to behave, for example when sitting at the table for breakfast, and they respond very well to staff's high expectation in terms of behaviour. Older pupils get on well together and are supportive. At the 39 Club they chat happily and break times are very sociable. In lessons their attitudes are positive and pupils listen well and contribute. Pupils in North Mundham have good relationships with staff but when they are not challenged in lessons, they do not always respond positively. The number of exclusions over the last year at North Mundham has reduced but it is still too high.

Quality of provision

Whilst teaching remains unsatisfactory overall, there is clear evidence of good teaching in some aspects. Teaching for the small number of primary pupils is good. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of each pupil and ensure that their skills are extended well, both academically and socially. Teaching at the 39 Club is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in English, where pupils benefit from secure

subject expertise. This is used well to ensure that the work is interesting and has clear outcomes which pupils are made aware of. Questioning is used particularly well to ensure that all pupils are involved and have the opportunity to contribute. At times, in one to one sessions, work and expectations are not sufficiently challenging and time is not used effectively.

Teaching at North Mundham is not effective. However, there are strengths in the teaching of art, where pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge and imaginative approaches. The high quality displays of pupils' work reflect the good progress pupils make in art. In a number of subjects the planning of work is not always effective. As a result, the range of strategies needed to meet the different needs of pupils in lessons is not evident and pupils all complete the same task regardless of their ability.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. For pupils of primary age and those attending the 39 Club it is generally satisfactory. However, for those pupils in Years 7 to 11 who are permanently excluded, including those pupils with a statement of special educational need, it is unsatisfactory. This is because the required 25 hours of education are not yet provided. The timetable has been expanded, but it is not sufficiently well focused on providing a suitable range of activities for pupils in the afternoon. There is not yet a clear analysis of how much time is allocated to each pupil in terms of the range of subjects and activities offered. The introduction of outdoor pursuits has been a good development which pupils clearly enjoy and are keen to participate in.

Whilst there are strengths in care, guidance and support, these remain unsatisfactory overall. The strength of relationships between staff and pupils ensures that pupils respond well and are trusting of staff. There are good systems in place to ensure pupils are safe and child protection issues are dealt with effectively. There has been a good start made in carrying out risk assessments for pupils which are now completed for all pupils when they start. The information is then being used to establish individual education and behaviour plans for each pupil. Pupils now have targets for improvement and, although at an early stage, there is an adequate system in place to ensure staff consider them when assessing pupils at the end of lessons.

Academic guidance is still not secure and the PRU is developing its systems to ensure that sharp and attainable academic targets are set. The appointment of a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is appropriate and has already had a positive impact in encouraging staff to consider how they are to assess pupils' academic progress. The PRU is working closely with the LA to establish a system for supporting pupils' behaviour. The role of tutors has been developed and pupils can earn merits which are displayed in each centre. This is all fairly new and not yet being used consistently by teachers when reminding pupils how to behave.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2007:

- review Key Stage 3 provision to ensure that it complies with statutory requirements – inadequate
- ensure that all teaching challenges, stimulates and matches individual pupils' needs – inadequate
- as a matter of urgency, ensure that risk assessments are completed for all pupils entering Area A PRU – good.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. A start has been made in drawing together the leadership team, and the involvement of the SENCO and area head of primary provision as part of this team is appropriate. There is not yet, though, a clear delegation of responsibility for senior staff for aspects of whole PRU provision. Senior staff are aware of their roles as heads of centre, but there has been insufficient attention to ensuring that they have clear roles and responsibilities across the PRU. This would enable the PRU to have a more focused approach to self-evaluation. This process is at an early stage and the head of the PRU has tried to take on too much in trying to gather all the evidence himself.

The head of Area A PRU and his staff have worked hard to establish new systems that will enable them to have a better understanding of how well pupils are doing and the overall effectiveness of provision. A new system for making initial assessments to set a baseline for pupils and undertaking regular assessments of their progress has been established. However, it is not yet consistently implemented across the PRU and where the data is available it has not yet been entered on to the newly established spreadsheet. These problems are reflected in the PRU's action plan, which rightly places importance on reintegration but does not focus sufficiently on improving achievements. As a result, the leadership team do not have an overview of the effectiveness of the PRU in enabling pupils to achieve.

The heads of the PRU and of the North Mundham centre have been in post less than a year. The pace of change has picked up in the last six to eight weeks but the pressure on the head of the PRU to support the head of the North Mundham centre and bring about all the changes required is not appropriate. Resources across the PRU are limited and the lack of specialist teachers, particularly at the North Mundham centre, prevents pupils from making better progress in the core subjects. Together with the need to establish a range of systems to support learning, this has meant that improvements have not always been sufficiently well focused.

Procedures for the monitoring of teaching are in place but there are no arrangements for shared observations or the moderation of judgements to ensure they are consistent. At present, judgements are over-generous and do not provide an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching.

The role of the management committee is at an early stage but is developing appropriately. The chair is keen to ensure that the committee has a clear

understanding of what needs to be done. There is a good focus on trying to encourage a wider range of specialists linked to outside agencies to join the committee.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2007:

- devise systems and procedures to measure the success of the PRU and use the information generated to hold leaders to account and plan for improvement – inadequate.

External support

The local authority's action plan is satisfactory and outlines the support needed to bring standards to an appropriate level. It has not, though, taken into account the need to support not only the head of the PRU but also the new head of the North Mundham centre. As a result, the head of out-of-schools service has had to contribute more time than has been allocated to the PRU. The LA has made good use of advisers and also local headteachers to provide support and this has provided the head of the PRU with a better understanding of what needs to be done.

The building work at North Mundham will have an impact on the head of the PRU's ability to improve provision and this has been recognised by the LA, but it is not clear what support will be provided.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Provide effective systems for supporting the head of the North Mundham centre in order to enable the head of the PRU to take on a more strategic role.
- Improve processes for gathering evidence to support self-evaluation of the PRU's effectiveness and use this to develop a more secure improvement plan for the PRU.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Assistant Director of School Improvement for West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascall
Additional Inspector