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12 December 2007

Mr K Purbhoo
The Head of Area A PRU
Area A - PRU South - Chichester
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Dear Krishna

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF AREA A - PRU SOUTH
- CHICHESTER**

Following my visit to your school on 28 and 29 November 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 February 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not been appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascal
Additional Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF AREA A - PRU SOUTH - CHICHESTER

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 28 and 29 November 2007

Evidence

The main focus of this monitoring inspection was to judge the impact of improvements in the North Mundham centre which was a cause for concern at the time of the last monitoring visit. Observations of teaching and scrutiny of work were focused on the North Mundham centre. The inspector scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the consultant assistant headteacher, the chair of the management committee, staff and representatives from the local authority (LA). Discussions were also held, and evidence gathered, concerning the other centres within Area A PRU provision.

Context

The North Mundham centre has moved into new premises which are more suited to its needs. There have also been a number of changes to staffing including the appointment of an acting head of centre and an increase in specialist teaching staff. The school is receiving support from a consultant assistant headteacher four days a week. Additionally, a student support worker has just been appointed for two and a half days a week. A new chair of the management committee has been in post since September. Primary pupils have been moved back into Area A and temporary accommodation has been found for them on the North Mundham site.

Achievement and standards

The results from the end of year examinations showed that a number of pupils in the PRU gained GCSEs and entry level accreditation. Of the 18 pupils entered, nearly all gained passes and over half gained A to C grades in one or more GCSEs. It is difficult to assess whether pupils did as well as they should have done because, until very recently, the PRU did not have a system for checking on the progress pupils were making. However, few of the pupils attending North Mundham gained accreditation by the end of Year 11.

Although it is early days, improvements in teaching at North Mundham are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. This is evident in subjects such as science where pupils show good recall of aspects of the digestive system and use technical terms to name organs in the body.

The PRU is now regularly assessing all new pupils to enable staff to have a clear understanding of their abilities. A new data system has been established that will enable this information, together with teachers' ongoing assessments, to be entered. This will enable the PRU to track the progress of its pupils. The PRU has high expectations for pupils' achievements and has set very challenging targets that are

well above those expected nationally. Pupils often benefit from one to one teaching and the PRU has been successful in enabling some pupils to reach their targets. In English, for example, five out of eight pupils achieved their target. The recent improvements in teachers' assessments will enable the PRU to have a clearer understanding of pupils' gains in learning and so enable staff to readjust these targets where appropriate. As yet, targets do not take into consideration pupils' varying abilities.

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

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

Personal development and well-being

The pupils in North Mundham generally respond well to the staff they know and most can stay on task in lessons. This, however, is not yet consistent. Some still struggle to remain in lessons, regardless of how interesting the work is, although several do take time out and return to catch up with the work they have missed. Behaviour is improving and this is reflected in the reduction in the number of exclusions which, although high, is a lot lower than it has been in the past. Pupils are beginning to respond to the new behaviour system and this was recognised when a pupil pointed out to another who was being disruptive that he would 'not get his target points'. Staff are looking at ways of improving the rewards systems so that more pupils are keen to be involved. There is a recognition that pupils have not yet 'bought into' the North Mundham centre and this is reflected in the very low attendance there. Overall attendance has not gone above 68% in the last three terms. There is evidence that a few pupils improve their attendance in comparison with their previous settings, but too many are not attending regularly enough to enable them to make progress in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching is improving at North Mundham. This is very evident in the more detailed planning of lessons and in the better focus on what teachers want pupils to learn. This is consistent amongst teachers and many continue to check on pupils' understanding right through to the ends of lessons. The improvements in staffing have enabled pupils to benefit from good subject specialists, particularly in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and English. Teachers use their knowledge effectively to extend pupils' understanding and they respond well to pupils' questions with clear explanations. In subjects such as science pupils are offered a variety of activities to hold their attention and help them learn. However, teachers are not yet adept at matching work to pupils' abilities and in too many lessons pupils are set the same task. As a result, their needs are not met and the work is either too easy or pupils need a lot of support to complete the work. The good teamwork between support staff and teachers supports pupils' learning well and there is clear evidence of staff being better informed about what is required of them in lessons. The marking of pupils' work is far more detailed and rigorous. There is a better focus on ensuring pupils know what National Curriculum levels they are working at and what they need to do to move to the next level.

The curriculum at North Mundham is improving. Most pupils are now being offered the recommended time of 25 hours. However, whilst not all choose to take up the full allocation of time, for some the time offered is still too low. For those pupils attending the 39 club, teaching time is well above that required. Although this is commendable, it has meant that funding for other pupils in Area A PRU has been reduced and the PRU has struggled to meet statutory requirements for all its pupils. The PRU has established good links with the local college and has appointed a member of staff to support pupils in college. It is expected that this will improve links further and enable pupils to be more effectively supported.

The PRU has been successful in reintegrating 39% of pupils back into mainstream education, and staff are looking to improve this further. However, the most challenging pupils are not well prepared for reintegration. The PRU has recognised that pupils are not being given the strategies they need to become independent and to have more control over their behaviour. Part of the role of the pupil support worker will be to develop staff expertise to provide pupils with the skills they need.

There are now appropriate systems for ensuring staff have a good awareness of pupils' knowledge and understanding when they start at the PRU. A detailed portfolio of each pupil is established, and includes clear risk assessments. This is now well embedded into the PRU's processes and is beginning to be used to track pupils' progress.

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 – satisfactory
- ensure that all teaching challenges, stimulates and matches individual pupils' needs – satisfactory
- as a matter of urgency, ensure that risk assessments are completed for all pupils entering Area A PRU – good.

Leadership and management

A strength of the PRU has been in developing and extending the relationships it has with local schools, and both staff and pupils have been able to benefit from these closer links. The most significant benefit has been the fact that every teacher now works closely with a colleague in mainstream. As a result, there is a much better understanding amongst teachers about planning their work and expectations of what pupils should be achieving.

There have been particular improvements in the monitoring of provision at the North Mundham centre, and the head of the PRU has a more accurate and clearer understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching. Leadership has benefited from the very good quality support of a consultant that has enabled staff to bring about improvements at the North Mundham centre. This is reflected in the effective action that has been taken to improve teaching, and appointments of new staff have been well focused on extending expertise within the PRU. This has

resulted in improving the opportunities for pupils to make better progress in their learning.

The members of the leadership team are beginning to develop an understanding of their roles in terms of not only managing their own areas of responsibility but also leading in aspects of Area A as a whole. However, whilst a start has been made, procedures for recording and analysing the work they do when monitoring provision have not yet been formalised, and the PRU is not yet making sufficient use of all the information it is gathering to enable it to plan for improvement. Self-evaluation is still at a very early stage and the PRU recognises that this is the next stage of its development. The new chair of the management committee is very aware of what steps need to be taken to bring about improvements and has high expectations in terms of providing support and challenge to the leadership team.

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 high quality support provided by the LA has been successful in enabling staff to have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve teaching and learning. The input of advisors and consultants has been highly valued by staff and has generated an enthusiasm and commitment to develop and improve their practice.

Considerable time has been spent in finding appropriate accommodation for the very small number of primary aged pupils within Area A. The LA recognises that the present situation is unacceptable and that it is a temporary arrangement.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve strategies for encouraging more pupils to attend on a regular basis.
- Continue to seek appropriate accommodation for primary aged pupils.