

15 November 2007

Mrs L Clement
Headteacher
Kingsfold Primary School
Martinfield Road
Penwortham
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 9HJ

Dear Mrs Clement

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KINGSFOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit to your school on 6 and 7 November, 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 April 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be 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 and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire local authority (LA).

Yours sincerely

Sonya Williamson
H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF KINGSFOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 6 and 7 November 2007

Evidence

I observed the school's work, including parts of five lessons. I scrutinised documents and work samples and met with the headteacher, groups of Year 4 and Year 6 pupils, representatives from the governing body and a representative from the Local Authority (LA).

Context

There have been no significant contextual changes since the time of the previous inspection.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement and standards remains inadequate although some progress has been made in both respects since the last inspection. School data, based on a range of evidence, show that pupils are making progress that is, at least in line with national expectations. Although the school is supported by LA consultants and advisors, there has been insufficient moderation of teacher assessments to ensure that measures of progress are accurate. Unvalidated data from 2007 national assessment tests shows that the value added by the school between Key Stage 1 and 2 remains significantly below corresponding national figures in all the core subjects. However, it has improved from its exceptionally low level in 2006 and more pupils make the progress expected. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards are rising at a faster rate than those nationally. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards remain below average with 70% attaining level 4 or higher in national tests. A much higher proportion of those pupils who have been at the school since reception achieve the expected standards. The school traditionally receives significant numbers of pupils who enter the school at none standard times, particularly during Key Stage 2. It does not yet have clear strategies in place to address the academic needs of these pupils.

The pace of pupils' progress in lessons is improving as data is increasingly used to match teaching and learning strategies to pupils' individual needs. It is best when the emphasis is on learning rather than completion of tasks, where teachers make links to prior learning and pupils' own experiences and most importantly, where teachers both challenge and support pupils with their learning. Progress slows when opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills are limited and teachers do not probe, extend and challenge pupils' expressions of their understanding.

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

- increase the pace of pupils' progress towards higher standards, particularly in English and mathematics – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive and attendance is satisfactory. Pupils take great pride in the successes they have with their work. They say that they prefer to learn through active involvement and through a range of teaching and learning strategies. Pupils behave well. They work co-operatively with each other and with their teachers. They make visitors very welcome and appreciate the improvements that are being made to their learning environment. Although the improvements to pupils' progress in English and mathematics are contributing to their future economic well-being, they do not have sufficient opportunities to work independently, to assess their own learning and to be consulted.

Quality of provision

The curriculum is increasingly meeting the needs of pupils because teachers are provided with better information to help them plan their lessons and evaluate how well pupils progress. Teaching assistants are increasingly well used in lessons to promote learning for groups of pupils as well as to look after the needs of the most vulnerable individual pupils, which they do very well. The learning environment is rich and attractive. Pupils know how to use a range of resources to support their learning. Most teachers plan to a consistent format that is well designed to encourage best practice in lesson planning. Planning is mostly well linked to curricular targets for pupils. Pupils are increasingly aware of their targets and what the next steps in their learning should be. However, they are not all aware of how to achieve the next steps.

Assessment data is now more consistently used to track pupils' progress in Key Stage 2. It is not yet sufficiently well used to track progress during the Foundation Stage and Key stage 1 and to set targets for learning from Key Stage 1 to 2. Teachers make good use of data to plan tasks that match the needs of different groups of pupils but there is sometimes insufficient emphasis on differences in pupils' learning. Some teachers are not yet using a sufficiently wide range of methods to assess pupils' learning during lessons. Too little consideration is given to the progress of groups of pupils or which aspects of teaching result in the best learning. This information is therefore not well used to inform decisions about whole school priorities, to share best practice and to challenge and support weaker practice.

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

- use accurate assessment information to plan pupils' learning in lessons and to check they are making the best progress they can. – satisfactory

Leadership and management

The school has produced an appropriate action plan for improvement. Although it has realistic targets and timescales, the success criteria by which improvement can be judged are not always sufficiently specific. The leadership and management team now have an enhanced role in promoting improvement and supporting the work of the headteacher. They are successfully encouraging the staff to look more critically at the effectiveness of teaching and learning and they contribute to in service training. However, staff meetings are not sufficiently focused on raising achievement. The checking and evaluation of the impact of improvement strategies has begun. Nevertheless, it is in its early stages and it is not yet rigorous enough to inform judgements about whether actions result in improved achievement for pupils. It is not well designed to identify discrepancies in achievement between groups and classes of pupils. Where tracking systems identify underachievement of pupils, senior leaders do not check that specific and effective interventions are made. Despite clear job descriptions, co-ordinators are not sufficiently empowered to take a lead in this work although there is some support from the LA. They are just beginning to develop improvement plans and undertake self-evaluation in the areas for which they have responsibility. Self-evaluation does not yet identify the stronger and weaker aspects of the school's strategies to promote improvement. However, the governors are rightly pleased with the progress being made in carrying out the post-inspection action plan. They are working hard to involve themselves in the work of the school and to understand how priorities should be chosen. They challenge the school as well as maintaining their support. They understand the importance of undertaking training. They are helping the school to set appropriate, yet increasingly challenging, targets for improvement.

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

- set more ambitious targets and timescales for improving the school's effectiveness with the full involvement of all those responsible for the leadership of the school. – satisfactory

External support

The LA has provided satisfactory support for the school since it was subject to special measures. The statement of action has been effective in identifying appropriate timescales for improvement. The actions chosen are well designed to enable leaders and managers in the school to take increasingly responsibility for the impact of their work as a result of appropriate training and support. The achievement of pupils is slowly improving. Some staffing difficulties in the LA have limited the consistency and impact of support for literacy. LA training is appropriately wide ranging and includes teaching assistants, teachers and governors as well as leaders and managers.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the assessment of learning and its use in evaluating teaching.
- Increase the rigour of checking and evaluation of strategies for improvement.

Please email this letter to the Ofsted email postbox for the region in which the school is based: SouthSIOA@ofsted.gov.uk or North_SIOA@ofsted.gov.uk or Midlands_SIOA@ofsted.gov.uk for quality assurance.

File Name

The filename should be: D school name, visit number (e.g. D Whitemore 2 SM)

Once the school has had 24 hours to report any factual inaccuracies, the post-visit letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Appropriate authority - chair of governors/Interim Executive Board (IEB)/ Proprietor – in independent schools
- LA – except for independent special schools and academies
- Secretary of State (i.e. Elridge Foster at the DCSF elridge.foster@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk and CausingConcern.schools@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk) and the specialist schools section
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the LA - where appropriate
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- Learning and Skills Council where the sixth form is deemed to be inadequate.

The letters should also be copied electronically to:

each member of the inspection team,

the regional ADM: SI

the regional HMI with responsibility for special measures [Steve Hardwick-North; Rob Hubbleday-Midlands; Linda McGill-South]

the LMI schools for the LA in which the school is located.

A copy with editing marked up should be forwarded to the:

Lead inspector

regional SIOA. post box