

19 June 2008

Miss Lynne Mullen
Headteacher
Bruche Community Primary School
Seymour Drive
Padgate
Warrington
WA1 3TT

Dear Miss Mullen

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BRUCHE COMMUNITY
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Chris Griffin and Judith Tolley, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 17 and 18 June 2008, 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 September 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

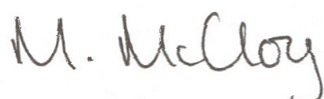
Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may 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 Warrington.

Yours sincerely



Marguerite McCloy
H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BRUCHE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 17 and 18 June 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and members of staff, the chair of governors, groups of pupils, the school's improvement partner and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, the new permanent headteacher has taken up her post. The deputy headteacher has resigned and will not be returning from a long-term period of sickness absence. The school is planning for the recruitment of a new deputy headteacher for the spring term 2009. Staffing restructuring plans have been put into place in preparation for a reduction in the number of pupils on roll from September. As a result of this and some staff movement to different or promoted posts elsewhere, six teachers are leaving at the end of this term and the school will be appointing three new teachers to Key Stage 2 classes in September.

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are not yet as high as they should be given the children's abilities and attainments on entry to the school. This judgement is confirmed both by data provided by the school and by inspectors' observations of pupils' work. By the end of Year 2 standards in mathematics are in line with the pupils' targets but are below their targets in English, especially in writing. At the end of Year 6 standards in both English and mathematics remain below target. This reflects the continuing legacy of these pupils' slow progress during previous years, especially the progress of potentially higher attaining pupils. In short, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who are working at Level 5 standards remains too low. Nevertheless, there is emerging a marked shift for the better in the school's efforts to make up lost ground. There is now a clear and shared understanding of why the school has found itself in special measures and of how high standards need to be for the school to claim that learning is effective. Inspectors saw evidence of improved progress in key areas of learning such as mental mathematics. Improvements of this nature reflect the introduction of more robust approaches to the use of assessment to drive up expectations and outcomes. For example, the school's evaluation of where above average pupils in Year 6 needed to improve in English, is leading to better progress in the development of their extended writing: they have a better understanding of their targets and how to achieve them. Pupils' reading standards are also improving because of a clearer focus on learning during guided reading lessons. A similarly rigorous use of assessment is leading to a sharper focus on where improvements are needed in mathematics in skills such as problem-solving, reasoning and mental calculations.

Class teachers throughout the school are starting to closely track the progress their pupils are making in relation to their targets. Teachers' more open sharing of this information with the children is helping to raise expectations. Teachers are also embedding skills of using assessment information to evaluate whether progress on specific programmes, such as the Intensifying Support Programme, is good enough. Consequently, since the last monitoring visit, the school has been putting into place assessment procedures that are laying the foundations for improved learning. There is still more to do. The first of a comprehensive half termly assessment of progress is scheduled for July. It will assess standards in reading, mental mathematics, spelling, and extended writing. As with the other mentioned changes, it will take time to achieve the beneficial impact of this well-judged initiative. However, the school has now reached a point where teachers in all years are forming a clearer idea of each pupil's potential achievement by the end of Year 6 and of their part in facilitating that achievement.

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

- Improve standards and achievement in English and mathematics – satisfactory
- Improve the use of assessment and target setting – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development was not a focus for this inspection, as it has always been a generally positive feature of the school. Nevertheless, further improvement has been evident in a number of ways since the first monitoring visit and these are worthy of note. Pupils have responded well to higher expectations with regard to effective use of time for learning and talk positively about the re-organisation of lunch-time procedures and activities. They are keen to get into their classes punctually in the mornings, making a brisk start to the day as staff complete registers to a more consistent deadline. Lesson timetables have been adjusted to match the school's higher expectations of learning time and curriculum balance. Pupils told inspectors that they were happy with the fair and more strictly applied rules because everyone understands what is expected of them. Pupils enjoy being recognised and rewarded for good behaviour and work. They display considerable loyalty and support to the school, the staff and the new headteacher.

Quality of provision

Good progress has been made to improve the standard of teaching and learning since the last monitoring inspection and no inadequate teaching was seen during this visit. The headteacher has made the focus on the quality of teaching and learning a priority for the school. A 'Bruche' model for lessons has been introduced and this, coupled with the developments in the use of assessment and target setting procedures, is proving successful in achieving a consistent approach to lesson planning. The quality of planning in the re-organised Foundation Stage has improved and is now more consistent. The school is aware of the need for Foundation Stage assessments to highlight strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress, and inform

planning more effectively to ensure learning and progress is continuous from the Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1.

Where teaching is good, planning identifies differentiation and the role of teaching assistants, and teachers and support staff work closely together. As a result work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Expectations are high and a brisk pace of learning is maintained. Presentations are clear so that pupils rapidly understand new ideas. Activities are well sequenced, preparing pupils well to work independently and in groups. Teachers make good use of questioning to enable pupils to respond successfully and to extend their learning. Classroom management is good and teachers use praise and encouragement well. Objectives are routinely shared with pupils and linked to targets and, as a result, pupils are well motivated, have positive attitudes towards their learning and behave well. Marking has improved and now pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve although there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of marking. Pupils have good relationships with adults and take pride in their achievements. When they are given the opportunity to participate in peer assessment they respond well and take this seriously. However, as yet this is at the early stages of development. Similarly, pupils respond well to opportunities to work with a partner and when this is the case they increase in confidence in sharing their ideas with a wider audience. Good use is made of resources such as interactive whiteboards to make lessons interesting and varied and pupils have the opportunity to experience a variety of learning styles.

In other, less effective lessons differentiation is not yet sharp enough. Pupils are not always sufficiently challenged or they are sometimes not given adequate support to succeed in tasks as well as they might. As a result some pupils have to wait for others to finish while others have to wait for help from the teacher. In both cases the pace slows and progress is hampered or there is a lack of urgency in completing tasks. Opportunities are missed to enable pupils to plan investigations, explore ideas for themselves or make predictions. Similarly, pupils are not always given the opportunity to work collaboratively to solve problems. In some cases support given enables them to solve problems but fails to encourage pupils to think things out for themselves.

Teachers are now confident with lesson planning and there is a good level of consistency in their approach to this. The school has a firm foundation to build on and there is now scope to inject more pace and challenge into lessons because pupils do respond positively to this.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – good

Leadership and management

Since the last monitoring inspection effective transition arrangements facilitated by the LA and the acting headteacher have enabled a smooth transfer of leadership. The new headteacher has made a significant and positive impact in a number of ways and has gained the respect of staff, governors and pupils. In a short time, the headteacher has acquired a thorough and accurate understanding of the school's

situation and taken decisive action to quicken the pace of improvement. This is particularly evident in the improving quality of teaching and lesson planning. Staff are held more accountable for improving their practice and raising standards. They are responding well to this and to the headteacher's clear guidance and high expectations. This is increasing teachers' confidence in their ability to be effective and developing their capacity to work with more initiative and independence in the future. As a result the headteacher is aware that there will soon be more opportunities for her to delegate responsibilities to middle leaders and all teachers. This will enable her to devote more time and energy to strategic planning for the realisation of the school's vision beyond special measures.

The chair of governors comes into school regularly to meet with the headteacher and is a member of the monitoring group which was set up to check on the school's progress. This is contributing to the governors' more well informed view of the schools strengths and weaknesses. Since the last visit, governors, with support and advice from the LA, have managed and planned for the changes in staffing for next term.

The acting deputy headteacher has provided valuable support and complementary skills to those of the headteacher and they work together well as a senior leadership team. At the moment, leadership is not disseminated more widely across the school due to varying levels of expertise and effectiveness. Further changes in the autumn term will necessitate a reorganisation of leadership and management responsibilities. The school is aware that the recruitment and induction of a substantive deputy headteacher and Key Stage 2 teachers for September will be very important in contributing to the gathering momentum and capacity for improvement.

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

- Improve leadership at all levels in the school – satisfactory

External support

The school continues to benefit from the guidance and support of LA advisers and consultants. A focus on developing the quality of teachers' planning has contributed to the improvements made in this area. In consultation with the headteacher, the LA has adjusted its support plans for the school in the forthcoming academic year. The school has identified that there is now less need for teachers to spend time out of class on discussion and planning as their confidence has grown. The emphasis is to move towards more evaluation of the impact of staff development on classroom practice, through direct observations and working alongside teachers and pupils. The LA is providing valuable advice on staffing issues, for example, in supporting the school in the recruitment of a deputy headteacher and Key Stage 2 teachers.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve standards and achievement in English and mathematics, particularly in the proportion of pupils who are capable of reaching the highest levels.

- Further develop assessment and target setting systems so that they are used consistently across the school and contribute to raising standards.
- Build on improvements being made to the quality of teaching and learning so that a higher proportion of lessons are good or better.
- Develop the skills of middle leaders to monitor, evaluate and improve their areas of responsibility.