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16 July 2008

Mrs Janet Parker
The Headteacher
Bursledon Junior School
Long Lane
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Southampton
SO31 8BZ

Dear Mrs Parker

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BURSLEDON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Following my visit with Jo Curd, Additional Inspector and Stephanie Matthews, Additional Inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 July 2008, 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 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

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 Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Linda Kelsey
H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BURSLEDON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 8 and 9 July 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, members of staff, the school council, members of the governing body, the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been no changes to the school status or members of staff. The school roll has fallen by 16 pupils. The school is now part of the intensive support programme and is receiving help from a consultant headteacher and a mathematics consultant as well as support in managing pupils' behaviour.

Achievement and standards

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 although the progress pupils are making in class and over the longer term is still inadequate. Based on teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have not met the targets set for them this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are now making satisfactory progress which is an improvement from the last inspection. This is because intervention procedures are effective and the work of the coordinator is starting to have an impact on those identified as in need of support.

Progress for other pupils in classes is inadequate because not enough of the teaching is good enough to make up lost ground in writing and mathematics. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils in class still affects achievement as pupils do not get enough work done in the time. There is too much low level chatter as well as some poor behaviour by a minority of pupils which at times disrupts and upsets the learning of others. Systems have been put in place to assess pupils' ability and to track their progress over time. However, this has not had time to have a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching for all, and in ensuring that all pupils make the best progress.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- Ensure pupils make more rapid progress in writing and mathematics – inadequate

Personal development and well-being

Some elements of personal development are good. Pupils show real enjoyment of many aspects of life in school, including the wide range of visits and residential activities. They work confidently in pairs and groups and are particularly proud of the school productions in which most get involved in some way. Pupils raise money for charities and understand the rules that are on display. They feel safe in school and

most make a good contribution to their own and the wider community. They show a good understanding of what it means to follow a healthy lifestyle and older pupils show good awareness of environmental issues. Pupils find out about other faiths in religious education lessons but as yet they are not acquiring a secure understanding of the variety and richness of life in our multicultural society. Pupils say there are still comments made to other pupils about where they come from and not enough has been done to counteract racist comments. There have been ten recorded incidents since February.

Behaviour is still inadequate overall. Attendance figures are improving although are slightly below the national figure. Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes in lessons and behave well around the school. Behaviour in the dining hall is now better as a result of initiatives taken by the school with the help of the school council. However, significant numbers of pupils rightly feel that some lessons are disrupted by unsuitable behaviour and that this affects their learning. The school records show that the use of unsuitable language is still an issue and that relationships are adversely affected by teasing and rough behaviour. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are developing adequately and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are used well across other subjects. Pupils say they feel they are well prepared to move to their secondary school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- Improve behaviour to eliminate instances of uncaring and disruptive behaviour, including racial incidents – inadequate

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning remain inadequate. There has been insufficient monitoring of lessons. As a result, the school have an overoptimistic view of how good teaching is and have not taken sufficient remedial action to improve the weaker teaching. Four out of nineteen lessons observed were inadequate. Although over half the lessons seen were good, pupils' work in books indicates that teaching and learning over time are inconsistent and have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.

Pupils receive extra help outside the classroom but lessons and curriculum planning are not ensuring that all pupils have work that is matched to their needs. Teachers are not making enough use of assessment information to vary work for different pupils. They still focus on tasks to do, rather than what pupils will learn from them and this was raised as a weakness at the last inspection.

Teaching in class often lacks pace, variety of delivery and does not challenge the most able. When activities are insufficiently interesting or insufficiently well matched to learning then pupils become restless and behaviour deteriorates. Teaching assistants are not well deployed in lessons to guide pupils learning and behaviour. Marking is inconsistent. At its best, it provides effective feedback to pupils, praising efforts and good work and offering helpful suggestions or challenge for improvements. Pupils report that they find this useful. However, some marking is inaccurate and too much consists of ticks which do not show pupils how they can improve their work or learning further.

The curriculum has an appropriate range of subjects taught. The increased emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing is helping teachers to focus more on how to improve basic skills in punctuation and sentence construction. Science, information and communication technology ICT and other subjects of the curriculum are being used to support progress in English especially in writing for different purposes and audiences. There is more extended writing, although this is not celebrated in displays around the school. Supporting the developing of numeracy skills across other subjects is not established as yet.

The developing of speaking and listening skills is good and pupils discuss issues in personal, social and health education that help their understanding of health and citizenship. All pupils benefit from the opportunity to learn French and pupils enjoy a good range of extra curricular opportunities, and sporting activities. Year 5 pupils are working on a French magazine in their own time after school. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in cycling proficiency sessions although none cycle to school.

The quality of most aspects of pastoral care is secure and individual pupils feel that they are supported well. Health, safety and safeguarding procedures are in place. The school is trying to forge stronger links with parents and outside agencies to ensure the well-being of pupils.

Academic guidance, although improving, is still not secure despite the greater focus on developing more robust assessment procedures. Year 6 pupils do know their targets, especially in writing. Pupils are given some opportunities for self-assessment and to assess the work of others but are unsure about what they need to do to improve.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- Make better use of assessments and targets to guide teachers' planning and ensure lessons provide appropriate challenge and support for all pupils – inadequate

Leadership and management

Leadership and management at all levels is currently inadequate because monitoring and evaluation of provision is weak. The school does not yet have a clear understanding of its current provision, weaknesses in teaching are left unchecked and senior members of staff are not held to account. Although the school has monitored planning and looked at pupils' work in books this has not been evaluated with sufficient focus on the progress all pupils will make in all lessons. Consequently, teaching and learning remain inadequate. Senior members of staff have taken some action to improve behaviour, notably encouraging a more consistent approach from staff and reorganising lunch times. However, some lessons are still insufficiently interesting to engage all pupils and maintain positive attitudes and there has been insufficient improvement in behaviour overall.

The governing body has developed its role. It is now at full complement and governors are working very actively to support the school. However, they too do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the school's current position or how their role can be developed to challenge the school. Although the local authority has provided some challenge and support to the school this has not been sufficiently consistent over time, thorough enough or effective in bringing about lasting improvements.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- Improve leadership and management and ensure that leaders at all levels evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately and have a strong impact upon improving achievement – inadequate

External support

External support to the school is inadequate. The statement of action produced by the local authority is satisfactory in that it identifies areas for improvement as key priorities. It has also set up methods for evaluating these against success criteria. However, support to implement these plans has not been strong enough because the timescales for these actions have been too slow to take effect. Some external support and consultancy has been put in place such as support for behaviour management, mathematics teaching and the leadership of the school. However, it is too early to have had an impact on improving the quality of leadership, teaching and the achievement of pupils.