



19 July 2005

Mrs K Money
Headteacher
College Town Infant & Nursery School
Branksome Hill Road
College Town
Sandhurst
GU47 0QF

Dear Mrs Money

Implementation of College Town Infant & Nursery School's Action Plan

Following my visit to your school on 4 and 5 July 2005, with my colleague Mr N Grenyer HMI, we write to confirm the findings and to notify you of the outcomes.

As you know, the inspection was part of a policy involving a broader series of visits by HMI and Additional Inspectors to check on the development and improvement of schools where the section 10 inspection indicated that the school was underachieving. You will recall that the aims of the visit were to assess the progress made in addressing and eliminating underachievement and meeting the targets given in the action plan. We also evaluated standards of achievement and the quality of education, especially in relation to areas of underachievement.

During the visit we inspected 18 lessons or part lessons; attended two registration periods and two assemblies; scrutinised a wide range of documentation provided by the school; and held discussions with yourself and nominated staff on the causes and areas of underachievement. We also examined a range of the pupils' work and spoke informally with other staff and pupils.

On the basis of the evidence gathered during the visit, we made the following observations to you, your deputy headteacher, a member of the governing body and a representative of the LEA.

The action plan, produced in response to the findings of the inspection of January 2004, is satisfactory. The document has been revised in the light of changing staff responsibilities; an appropriate structure addresses each area of concern and all relevant subsections are cross-referenced. The actions identified

are generally appropriate and the most recent revision reflects the progress made in addressing the causes of underachievement. Appropriate success criteria are not always been provided for those areas requiring improvement; the documents sometimes substitute the actions to be taken for the impact sought.

The pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are generally below those expected for their age. They make good or very good progress in the Foundation Stage. Staff in this area have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and provide them with a range of interesting activities that capture their imagination and provide motivation for learning. Activities are well matched to the pupils' learning needs and they make good progress across the six areas of learning.

Population mobility within the catchment area averages 15 per cent per annum; a significant proportion of the pupils who enter Year 1 have not experienced the Foundation Stage curriculum in this or any other school. Similarly, many fail to complete Key Stage 1 before their families are posted elsewhere.

The unvalidated results of the recently completed 2005 Key Stage 1 national tests showed that, by comparison with 2004, the proportion of the pupils attaining the expected Level 2 in reading and writing declined by 11 and three percentage points to 79 and 81 per cent respectively; these results are likely to be below the national average. The proportion of the pupils reaching the expected levels in mathematics declined by three percentage points to 94 per cent; this result is likely to remain close to those of schools nationally. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading is likely to be just below the national average. However, the proportion of the pupils attaining Level 3 in writing and mathematics improved to levels likely to match those of schools nationally. The school's analysis and use of assessment data is very good. Effective support from the LEA has helped to provide a secure basis for target setting and intervention strategies.

In lessons, reading levels are close to those expected for the pupils' ages. Speaking and listening skills are above average and most pupils speak with confidence. Written work is more variable; the pupils enjoy writing but presentation is weak; too few pupils use full stops and capital letters, and many employ idiosyncratic spelling. The pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving. Higher-achieving pupils have good mathematical skills; they calculate accurately and recall basic number facts quickly. In reception classes, the pupils can combine numbers to 10 and most recognise the common mathematical symbols. In Year 2, standards are close to those expected for the age of the pupils; they respond well to the use of practical apparatus and kinaesthetic activities to support learning.

Personal development was satisfactory or better in 15 lessons and very good in three. Most pupils were keen to learn, concentrated well and sustained their

efforts. The pupils moved around the school building calmly and purposefully with due attention to others' safety. In the playground, the zoning of activities was generally effective, although minor accidents occurred as pupils tired towards the end of the lunch hour. Attendance has improved and at 94.2 per cent is close to the average for primary schools. There have been no exclusions in the current academic year.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection; it was satisfactory or better in all lessons, including eight where it was good and four where it was very good. In the best lessons, the planning was detailed, tasks were developed effectively from what the pupils already knew, and the teachers had high expectations about what the pupils should achieve. Starter activities were brisk and well focused; main tasks were developed through challenging questions and good use was made of plenary sessions. Well-timed interjections allowed teachers to gauge the pupils' understanding, to develop subject-specific skills and to increase the pace of the lessons. Good use was made of new technology. The teachers had an encouraging and positive manner but were firm and assertive when the need arose. The teaching assistants, most of whom are effective instructors, made an important contribution in many of the lessons.

In those lessons that were satisfactory but had some shortcomings, some of the work lacked the appropriate level of challenge for particular groups of pupils. In some lessons the teachers' explanations failed to engage the attention of the whole class or opportunities to secure conceptual understanding were missed. In these lessons, the management of learning support assistants was not effective.

The gains in learning were satisfactory or better in all lessons; they were good or better in 12 lessons in which brisk and sharply focused teaching engaged the pupils' attention. In these lessons, the pupils worked with determination and were proud of their achievements.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is on a phased return to work; the management partnership between the headteacher and her deputy, who has led the school in the headteacher's absence, is effective. Leading with vision and determination they have secured the required improvements in teaching, learning and the use of assessment. In doing so they have established a very clear educational direction for the school's development and they have rigorously pursued school improvement. There are systematic arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, through first-hand observation and through the analysis of performance data. The schedule of the school day includes a number of short and ineffective sessions where the gains in learning are limited. The governance of the school is good. The governing

body have evaluated the monitoring of teaching and learning, joining staff at all levels in their review of the work of the school.

The LEA has provided satisfactory support for the school; effective support has been provided for assessment and the introduction of new interactive technology.

Evaluation of Progress:

The school is making good progress towards raising pupils' attainment and eliminating underachievement.

In relation to the action plan and the impact of the actions taken, good progress has been made in addressing the key tasks which relate to the school's underachievement.

In order to maintain the progress made so far, the headteacher staff and governors need to: improve the focus on subject based literacy across the curriculum; review the structure of the school day to eliminate ineffective short sessions and reduce the level of minor accidents in the latter part of the lunchtime session.

I am copying this letter to the chair of governors and the Director of Education, Children's Services and Libraries for Bracknell Forrest. This letter will also be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

DAVID JONES
HM Inspector of Schools