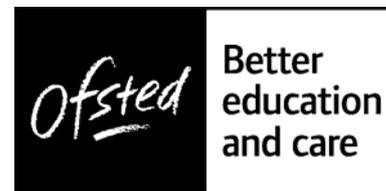


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Mr D Harrison  
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Dear Mr Harrison

### **Implementation of Boundary Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Jane Jones HMI and Jennie Weltman, Additional Inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 June 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the seventh monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school has made good progress since the last monitoring inspection and reasonable progress overall since being subject to special measures.

The school is permitted to appoint two newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education, Leisure and Cultural Services for Blackpool. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF BOUNDARY PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the seventh monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit, 18 lessons or parts of lessons, including a Key Stage 2 'singing for fun' session, and one registration period were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the manager of the Key Stage 1 special education resource facility (SERF), the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science, the chair of governors, and the LEA's principal adviser. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils, and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and the LEA's principal adviser.

Early indications are that the school is unlikely to meet its statutory targets for the pupils' performance in the 2005 national tests at both key stages. The provisional results at Key Stage 1 are broadly similar to those for 2004, which were well below average when compared with all maintained schools but in line with schools in similar contexts. There was a slight increase in the pupils' average points score in mathematics and decreases in reading and writing. The teacher assessments at Key Stage 2 in 2005 reflect the Year 6 pupils' very low attainment in English, mathematics and science, with only about half attaining the standard expected of their age, Level 4, and very few pupils attaining Level 5. The school's analysis of the optional tests in Key Stage 2 shows that the pupils' progress over time has been no better than satisfactory, and was unsatisfactory for too many pupils. However, the evidence from lessons and samples of the pupils' work shows that the higher-ability pupils are meeting the expected standard but, overall, attainment is below or well below average.

The pupils' progress in lessons is generally stronger than their progress over time. The sharply focused lesson objectives aid the small steps in learning in lessons, whereas the gaps in the pupils' prior learning and their weak literacy and basic skills adversely affect their longer-term progress. More consistently good or better teaching is needed to increase the pupils' rate of progress and eradicate the legacy of underachievement in Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 16 of the 18 lessons. It was good in six lessons and excellent in one: in this lesson, clear instructions, skilful questioning and excellent modelling supported the pupils' learning in design and technology and promoted their personal and social development very well. The partnership between the teacher and the teaching assistant was highly effective and seamless in operation. Strengths of the good teaching included positive relationships that enabled unobtrusive management of the pupils' behaviour and effective teamwork between adults. The teachers planned a range of interesting activities; for example, 'hot-seating' was used effectively in concluding plenary sessions. There was a good emphasis on the use of subject-specific language. In many lessons, there was an ethos of respect; the staff modelled the behaviour they expected of the pupils, and used praise to affirm good behaviour.

The staff know and care for the pupils well. Planning is a general strength of the teaching, particularly in English and mathematics where groups of pupils are set different activities that meet their needs. There were, however, some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of standards of work, including presentation. There were many good displays in classrooms, corridors and communal areas. The teaching that was satisfactory rather than good lacked vibrancy: the pace was pedestrian, and opportunities to involve all the pupils and to develop their vocabulary and oracy were missed. The quality of marking was inconsistent, although there were some examples of good practice.

The teaching was unsatisfactory in two lessons. The teachers followed the school's policy for behaviour management, but have not established secure relationships with the pupils who present greater challenge to staff whom they do not know well: they are not tolerant of change or of shortcomings in teaching. A principal weakness of the lessons was that the tasks were not well matched to the pupils' needs and abilities.

The quality of learning was satisfactory in nine lessons, good in six and excellent in one; it was unsatisfactory in two lessons. The pupils responded positively to good teaching; they sustained their concentration and listened well to their teacher and to each other. Well-established routines have made the pupils self-sufficient: the school is consequently well placed to seek more opportunities for the pupils to learn independently. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning were satisfactory or better in 16 lessons, including seven in which they were good, three very good and two excellent; they were unsatisfactory in two lessons. Behaviour sometimes became fractious where teaching and learning were weaker. The pupils' behaviour around the school was very good. The pride they take in their environment was evident.

There are continuing improvements in the school's relationships with parents. More parents have become involved in the school's work by volunteering to support in classrooms or on visits, or participation through the behaviour change team. A recent survey, analysed by the parent governors, showed many parents felt positive about coming into school; this was reflected in the proportion, about two thirds, who attended the last parents' evening. However, the survey also showed that parents had concerns about bullying and homework. The school works hard to care for its pupils, including strategies to address instances of bullying. A dedicated telephone line for parental contact has been set up and increased time given to the attendance officer whose brief has been widened from attendance to broader aspects of the agenda set by *Every Child Matters*. In response to the findings of the survey, the school has set up a homework club for the pupils in Key Stage 2: about 40 pupils attended the first sessions.

The school council continues to make a valuable contribution. The minutes of its meetings record good quality discussion of important aspects of the school's work. Recent developments include the involvement of pupils from the school council in interviews for staff and some meetings of the senior leadership team.

The headteacher provides increasingly confident leadership of the school. He has a clear vision for its future and its place in and contribution to the local community, underpinned by a whole-hearted commitment to inclusion. His focus on standards and achievement is well understood by staff and there is a good engagement with improvement. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; less-than-satisfactory performance is pursued robustly. Continuing professional development, through external courses and informal support within the school, is appropriately linked to performance management. However, there is now a need to develop a strategic approach to raising the proportion of good teaching and hence increasing the rate of the pupils' progress. The teaching and learning co-ordinator has not proved influential in this respect.

The headteacher is supported by two deputy headteachers whose whole-school roles draw on their strengths. Due to vacancies and long-term absences, both are currently full-time class teachers in Years 2 and 6. Staffing continues to be an area of fragility. There are, at present, a number of temporary teachers, some on one-year contracts and others who joined the school more recently. Two teachers have left the school since January, two are on long-term absence, and one has recently returned. The school is currently appointing teaching staff for next year. The headteacher's plan to review the leadership structure to meet the school's future needs is appropriate: the current structure is located in historical arrangements that pre-date the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools.

The role of the pairs of subject co-ordinators is beginning to develop well. The leadership of the core subjects has been clarified. Action plans have been drawn up, budgets determined, and subject policies drafted with the help of the LEA's Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) consultant. The co-ordinators' management role is well understood; good teamwork is emerging. Monitoring through lesson observations and scrutiny of planning and pupils' books is becoming established. The co-ordinators provide oral feedback to staff. Notes from lesson observations include areas for development; the co-ordinators might usefully record aspects of good practice that are worth sharing as well as points for action following other monitoring activities. Other useful work has included the development of curricular targets and portfolios of assessed work. The three co-ordinators have also been involved with planning and delivering training for staff.

Overall, there has been good progress in developing leadership and management, leading to an increased capacity for further improvement in the quality of provision.

Governance continues to develop well. Most governors show strong commitment to the school, especially the parent and co-opted governors. Useful training has been received. Links between governors and subject co-ordinators are developing well. A system of meetings has recently been introduced in which questions previously shared with co-ordinators formed the basis of the discussion. The co-ordinators and the governors reported that the meetings were successful. More governors have visited the school, increasing their involvement in and first-hand knowledge of its work. The governing body is showing an increasing capacity for holding school to account and acting as its critical friend.

The LEA continues to meet its commitment to the school, providing support of good quality from a range of its services. The school continues to receive a high level of support from the ISP consultant. However, the nature of the LEA's support has changed: the emphasis is now on the LEA meeting the school's requests for help in specific areas rather than the school being dependent on the LEA to determine what is required. The headteacher values the support he receives from the principal adviser and from a local headteacher who acts as a mentor. A key role for the LEA is to help the school meet the challenge of raising the quality of teaching.

### **Action taken to address the key issues**

**Key Issue 1: raise the quality of teaching, particularly in the junior classes, to the standard of the best in order to raise attainment across the curriculum by:**

- **developing the school's assessment procedures to provide work for the pupils which is better matched to their abilities and builds on what they already know, understand and can do;**
- **planning lessons that are challenging and set high expectations for all pupils;**
- **raising standards of behaviour, particularly those in classes where it is causing concern, by ensuring that all teachers manage pupils effectively and apply the school's behaviour policy more rigorously**

Improvements in teaching have been maintained. In general, planning is thorough and activities are well resourced. In most classes, teaching methods are varied to match the range of learning styles and to motivate pupils. Most teachers evaluate their lessons and, as a result, the work they set subsequently builds on the pupils' prior achievements, although it is not always sufficiently challenging for those who are most able. Expectations of the pupils' behaviour are high, although not consistently of the standards they achieve. Layering the objectives for lessons has enabled the teachers and pupils to be clear and precise about what will be achieved by the end of lessons. Explanations of the planned learning are generally clear and the teachers prepare the pupils well for the tasks they are to undertake. Where lesson objectives are linked to the targets set for individuals or groups, the strategy is especially successful in moving the pupils' learning on. Overall, the pupils know and understand the targets they have been set. While there are examples of marking that is matched closely to learning objectives or targets, practice is not consistent across the school, so that pupils do not always know what they need to do next to improve their work. During lessons, oral feedback to pupils is often helpful and encouraging, and the pupils respond positively.

Good progress has been made on tracking the pupils' progress and using the data gathered to inform the setting of targets. The school's knowledge and understanding of the pupils' performance are increasing all the time. Guidance provided for teachers, through portfolios and examples of pupils' moderated work, has improved the accuracy of their assessments. However, the accuracy and frequency of assessments of pupils' learning as lessons progress are not as well developed in all classes, although where the teaching is most effective, concluding

plenary sessions are used well to check pupils' understanding. In general, the pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluation of their own learning.

The school has established a clear policy for managing pupils' behaviour, which is applied consistently in almost all classes. Rewards and sanctions are understood by the pupils who believe that the systems are fairly applied. These factors, in combination, have resulted in sustained improvements in behaviour. Exclusions, significant incidents and reported bullying are resolved and monitored carefully.

Provision of intensive support for a small number of pupils in the SERFs varies and, while the contribution each SERF makes in each key stage is valued highly, inconsistency of approach is evident. Provision in the Key Stage 1 SERF is excellent and provides a model on which staff can build in the school as a whole. Procedures for reintegration vary too much. The school continues to develop and improve its extended provision for pupils and works effectively to secure the well-coordinated involvement of external agencies.

Progress on this key issue is good.

**Key Issue 2: improve the balance of the curriculum to raise standards by:**

- **making more effective use of time;**
- **developing the breadth of the curriculum to provide more opportunities for the pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills;**
- **raising the quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision;**
- **providing more opportunities for the pupils to show creativity and to develop independence in their learning;**
- **enriching the curriculum through an enhanced range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and visitors to support the pupils' learning**

The teachers use time well in lessons: starter activities are brisk, plenary sessions well focused, and the pupils are engaged in tasks for a good proportion of the lesson. Appropriate time each week is allocated to the core subjects, while retaining curricular breadth. The school is, however, aware of the need at this stage to give even greater emphasis to literacy in order to remove barriers to successful learning and to ensure pupils can capitalise on opportunities in other curricular areas. For instance, the school could consider the more overt development of literacy and language skills through other subjects. The headteacher has appropriate plans to review the Foundation Stage and transitions into the nursery and between key stages to ensure that the provision meets the needs of the pupils. Moreover, there is a need to develop the pupils' independent learning skills.

The teachers' ICT skills are improving steadily despite technical difficulties. However, the development of ICT as a subject and as an aid to enhance learning has not been systematic and has not been monitored to check that all the pupils are receiving appropriate opportunities.

The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is improving. The pupils have opportunities to take responsibility, for example through

the school council and the system of playground 'buddies'. They raise funds for charities, and assemblies are now based on suitably planned themes. The 'singing for fun' session did not, however, include an act of collective worship. The good relationships in lessons are supporting the pupils' social development. The continued development of extracurricular provision, for example visits to museums, is enriching the pupils' experience. The Education Action Zone's work with gifted and talented pupils has led to successes for the school in French, music and young enterprise competitions. There is, however, more to do to develop the pupils' cultural and multicultural awareness.

Progress on this key issue is reasonable.

**Key Issue 3: raise levels of attendance by:**

- **ensuring registers are monitored thoroughly;**
- **setting achievable targets and implementing effective strategies in order to meet them**

The school continues to implement a range of effective strategies to promote good attendance. A multidisciplinary approach is developing; the planned widening of the role of attendance officer to encompass the issues in *Every Child Matters* is a positive move and very relevant to the context of the school and the significant numbers of vulnerable pupils and families that it serves. Attendance to date this year is 92.7 per cent, which is just below the school's target but is nearly 10 per cent higher than two years ago. Unauthorised absence has fallen but remains high at 2.3 per cent. There is a small core of low attenders who are proving hard to contact. Two cases that reached prosecution resulted in custodial sentences; the attendance of the pupils has subsequently improved.

Progress on this key issue continues to be good.