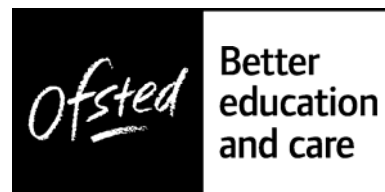


Tribal Education
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

Ofsted helpline
0845 404045
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Mrs Lynn Schneidereit
Cranford CE Primary School
Church Lane
Cranford
Kettering
Northamptonshire
NN14 4AE

Dear Mrs Schneidereit

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CRANFORD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Champak Chauhan HMI to your school on 16 and 17 November 2005, 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 2005.

This letter 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.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, teachers, school governors and a representative of the local authority (LA).

Context

The building work underway in the school at the time of the inspection is now complete. The school has much improved administrative and staff accommodation and improvements have been made to the teaching areas. The school now has a satisfactory playground space for the pupils to use at break and lunchtimes. The teaching commitment of the headteacher has been

reduced to one day a week in order to increase the time she has available to lead, manage and evaluate the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

When they start school the children generally have above average skills. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception year and achieve above average standards by the time they start Year 1. This satisfactory progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2.

The national test results for the Year 6 pupils in 2005 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Although overall progress in Years 3 to 6 is good the school's own internal tracking data and evidence from lessons seen indicate that some pupils do not make the progress they should as they move through the school. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have been improved and training for teachers is currently underway. The pupils are being provided with increased opportunities to improve their abilities in ICT but these developments have yet to have an impact on standards in the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- raise standards and achievement, giving priority to English, mathematics, science and ICT – satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Most pupils have good levels of motivation and they maintain their concentration on their learning. Many are eager to participate in whole class discussions and are not afraid to hypothesise about possible answers. They are able to do this because of the very good relationships in the classrooms. The pupils are confident and many are articulate. They work productively with each other and with the adults. Pupils are friendly and welcoming and they are keen to talk to visitors. The pupils report that they enjoy coming to school and feel happy and secure within it. They are encouraged to take individual responsibility through, for example, acting as book monitors or helping in assemblies. There is also a school council that is active and the pupils have made sensible suggestions for improving provision. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthier lifestyles and healthier eating.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. The daily school assemblies enhance the pupils' spiritual development through prayer, reflection and the singing of hymns. Pupils have a keen sense of what is right and wrong. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is generally satisfactory. Pupils develop a good understanding of their community, and are taken on external and residential visits in this country

and abroad. The development of their understanding of life in an ethnically diverse society, however, is more limited.

Quality of provision

There have been some improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the school was inspected in February 2005. The teaching and learning inspected were satisfactory or better in five out of six lessons. It was good in two lessons and some of the satisfactory teaching had some good features. In the better teaching, the planning was detailed and took into proper account the needs of the different ages and abilities in the class. The planning is routinely characterised by the identification of learning objectives and success criteria for the pupils. A good range of resources and approaches was used. This enabled the needs of the various pupils to be met. The teacher had good questioning skills that consolidated and enhanced the knowledge and understanding of the pupils. Praise was routinely used and the pupils responded well to this. Teachers sometimes made whole class teaching points which injected pace to the learning. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are known and routinely met, especially with the use of teaching assistants.

Where the teaching and learning were relatively weaker or unsatisfactory, the teachers had not planned satisfactorily for the range of needs in the classes. Groups of pupils were often underachieving. Pupils spent too long on the carpet and teaching assistants were not used to best effect during the whole class part of the lesson. The school is not meeting its own target in the action plan on teaching and learning which is to have 100% of lessons satisfactory or better with 50% good by the end of this term.

Curriculum planning is satisfactory. With the help of LA staff it has been strengthened in various subjects, for example in literacy, numeracy and physical education. The pupils' work is routinely marked but there is no consistency between teachers. One teacher will routinely set a target based on the marking of written work but another will not. The quality of support and guidance offered to pupils is generally good. The staff know the pupils well. However, there remain weaknesses in offering pupils appropriate support to enhance their academic progress.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified in the inspection in February 2005:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning and establish robust assessment procedures – the school has made generally satisfactory progress in improving teaching and learning; assessment procedures have been improved at whole school level but they are not having an impact in improving pupils' progress in lessons and so there is inadequate progress for that aspect of the area for improvement.

Leadership and management

Aspects of the leadership and management have improved, but as yet they are not having sufficient impact on the quality of the teaching and learning in the school. There is a lack of urgency on the part of the headteacher to address the important issues facing the school.

Assessment is inadequate overall. The systems for tracking the progress of the pupils have improved and are satisfactory, but the information the school has on what pupils know and can do is not used by all teachers to plan suitable work. As a result, some pupils are underachieving. The headteacher is not doing enough to improve this.

The school is over reliant on the LA to provide support in evaluating progress and not enough is being done independently by the school. What evaluation there is of teaching and learning lacks sufficient rigour to provide clear guidance to staff regarding areas for improvement.

The governing body has been effective in improving the physical environment both inside and outside the school. A new playground has been built and a play area for the younger pupils has been established next to their classroom. In addition, a new library, headteacher's office, and a learning zone have been created in the main building. The longstanding problems of the hall still remain and will take some time to resolve. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in all classrooms and the school has acquired ten new laptops. These improvements have had a positive impact on the physical, social and personal development of the pupils. The governors' monitoring and evaluation of the standards and quality of teaching are less secure and rely too much on anecdotal evidence. Governors do not receive the information they need in order to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning or the standards in the school. Without this information they are unable to successfully hold the school to account.

The LA has provided good support to the school in the early stages of developing the roles of the senior teacher and subject leaders. This work has been well received by the staff, but as yet the staff involved have not been allocated time to fulfil their subject leadership roles. Consequently, they are having limited impact on the work of the school at present.

Comments on school action plan

The school action plan is satisfactory. The plan rightly gives a high priority to improving the quality of teaching and learning in the school. It contains appropriate actions that have the potential to bring about the necessary improvements. The key outcomes in the plan mainly relate to end of key stage performance. The plan does not have short term goals for each year group. Consequently it is difficult for the school to measure progress in teaching and learning in all classes.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- improve leadership and management and develop the roles of the senior teacher and subject leaders – inadequate progress
- resolve the weaknesses in accommodation and resources – good progress.

External support

The LA has provided very good support to the school since it went into special measures. The school improvement advisor (SIA) knows the school well and is challenging the school to raise expectations. The headteacher is receiving good advice from the LA but is not always acting on this to best serve the pupils. For example, the school is currently organised into three classes which vary in size from 33 pupils in one class to only 13 in another. Local authority advice on a more effective organisation that would serve the pupils better was not adopted by the school. Consequently the pupils are not currently being taught in the most appropriate groupings.

The LA statement of action is good. The SIA and other officers of the LA have worked closely with the school in the production of its action plan. Arrangements for LA monitoring of progress the school is making are good. The key outcomes identified in the LA statement of action and project plan are effectively linked to those in the school action plan and LA documentation clearly evaluates the progress the school is making. The pace of development is mindful of the size of the school and has been thoughtfully constructed to ensure key staff development opportunities are well targeted and provided at the best possible time. The LA has facilitated support from a range of consultants and is promoting links with other schools and is including the school on the next cohort of schools to take part in the Primary Strategy Leadership Programme.

The LA is aiming to have the school taken out of special measures by the summer of 2006. This is challenging but achievable if there is greater urgency on the part of the school to do so.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures is inadequate.

The quality of the LA's statement of action is good.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed by the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Strengthen the leadership and management of the headteacher so that there are marked improvements in:
 - the quality of teaching and learning
 - the use of assessment information throughout the school to ensure challenging work is set for all pupils
 - subject leadership in the school.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for Northamptonshire LEA and the Peterborough Diocese

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall
H M Inspector