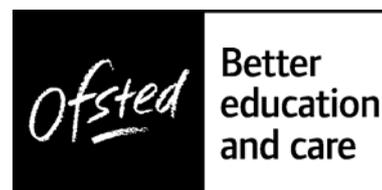


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Mrs C Lancey
The Headteacher
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20 April 2006

Dear Mrs Lancey

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WEST HUNTSPILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Kevin Jane HMI and Peter Sanderson HMI to your school on 22 and 23 March 2006, 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 October 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 including nine lessons and one assembly, scrutinised documents, and met with a range of staff, representative groups of pupils, the chair and vice chair of governors, the link adviser and the consultant headteacher.

Context

There have been no significant changes in the context of the school since the previous inspection.

Achievement and standards

In the lessons observed standards were broadly just in line with age related expectations. However, given the mixed age classes and the range of ability within them standards could be higher especially for the more able pupils. The pupils made satisfactory progress in the lessons but, since many have a legacy of underachievement to make up for, the expectation needs to be that pupils make good progress. The pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities made satisfactory progress as a result of the good support they received from additional adults.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2005

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science—inadequate progress.

Personal development and well-being

Without exception the pupils' behaviour and attitudes were good both in classrooms and around the school. The consistent application of 'The Golden Rules' and the rewards system is valued by the pupils so that they are keen to do well and to be recognised for doing so. The representative groups of pupils that inspectors talked with were courteous, confident and very positive about how their views were being listened to through the school council. Pupils reported that they like coming to school and the older pupils said that the school was 'much better' since the new headteacher came. Attendance has improved and unauthorised absence has been significantly reduced. All the pupils said that they felt safe in school and that bullying was rare. When it did happen it was not a problem as they knew who to go to and something was always done about it.

The pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know right from wrong, they work well together and play well together. Good displays and topic work are helping them to understand other cultures. The assembly was spiritually uplifting and the pupils enjoyed it but there was little opportunity for spiritual development in lessons.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has begun to improve in that the individual lessons inspected were broadly satisfactory but overall teaching remains inadequate as there is not enough good or better teaching. More good teaching is essential if the pupils are to achieve standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 that are more closely matched to the national age related expectations. Only one good lesson was seen and there were two lessons in which the strengths and weaknesses were finely balanced. The most common strength was the relationship that the teachers have established with their classes through using shared humour and very effective behaviour management strategies.

Other positive features were the opportunities provided for speaking and listening across the curriculum and the sharing of learning objectives with classes at the outset of the lesson.

Weaknesses common across a number of lessons were the lack of planned opportunities for assessment in the lesson that related to the learning objectives; insufficient planning of the work to meet the range of abilities in the class; and low expectations, particularly of the higher attaining pupils. This teaching lacks creative or imaginative approaches. There was little to excite the pupils in the lessons and although the interactive whiteboards were being used it was often for little more than the traditional 'chalk and talk' teacher delivery. Although the pupils work was regularly marked there were only a few example of good diagnostic marking where the pupils were given guidance on what they needed to do to improve. The pupils reported that they are not clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. A good system is being established to track individual pupils' progress but it will not begin to have an impact until next term. Curriculum provision was not inspected on this visit.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2005

- ensure that the teaching and curriculum provision meet the needs of all pupils—inadequate progress
- make full use of the information gained from checking pupils' progress to improve planning and provide challenging work in lessons—inadequate progress.

Leadership and management

The headteacher who had only been in post a few weeks at the time of the last inspection is providing good leadership and management. She has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve and has implemented sensible strategies to ensure that it does. The leadership and management team have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and are being held to account by the headteacher.

The school development plan is satisfactory, it is very detailed, and includes a number of documents. It includes all the areas for improvement, has been costed and makes clear who is responsible for each of the actions. It would benefit from finish dates being given for each of the actions and more precise success criteria for each of the areas for improvement. A separate chronological list of actions has sensibly been drawn up and this includes an evaluation of the actions. On a further document 'next steps' are identified.

Robust procedures for monitoring literacy, numeracy and science are in place. Appropriate priorities are being set following the regular focus on each of these areas. The tracking of pupils' progress is at an early stage of development and, consequently, so is target setting which lacks challenge.

However, the system has the potential to ensure that from next term teachers will be much better informed about individual pupil progress in relation to school and national targets.

The governing body has been suitably reorganised into new committees and the chair and vice chair have recently undertaken training to ensure that they are better equipped to hold the school to account. The governing body is now fully aware of its responsibilities and is well placed to ensure that it fulfils them.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2005

- improve systems and procedures for evaluating how well it is performing—satisfactory progress.

External support

The local authority (LA) statement of action is satisfactory and confirms its confidence in both the governing body and the headteacher to ensure that the school is removed from special measures by the spring of 2007. A core group of LA advisers and consultants, the headteacher, and the chair of governors has been established to monitor and evaluate the school's progress. A broad range of relevant support has already been put in place including an LA adviser acting as consultant headteacher. The LA has recognised that additional funding is required to deliver the school development plan and is currently seeking authority to release those funds.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures—satisfactory.
The quality of LA's statement of action—satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children and Young People for Somerset.

Yours sincerely

Susan Kara
H M Inspector