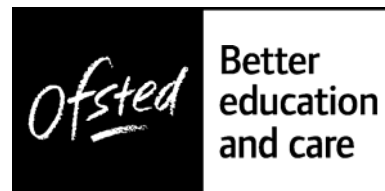


Tribal Education  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0845 123 6001  
F 0845 123 6002

Ofsted helpline  
08456 404045  
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Mrs C O'Malley  
The Headteacher  
Fairway Primary School  
Muirfield Gardens  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B38 8XQ

9 March 2006

Dear Mrs O'Malley

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF FAIRWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 February 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in April 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**

I observed five lessons, scrutinised a range of documents, and met with you, the deputy headteacher, the senior management team, the chair of governors, the school's finance officer, the school's financial services area manager and a representative of the local authority (LA). Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and pupils. Using this evidence I made the following observations to you, the deputy headteacher, two representatives of the LA and a parent governor.

## **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit in November 2005 the number on roll has continued to fall. There are currently 83 pupils attending the school. A new, permanent deputy headteacher took up her post in January 2006. The two overseas teachers have left and an experienced teacher has been appointed on a fixed, two term contract. The school has successfully negotiated associate membership with a local Education Action Zone (EAZ). This membership provides access to additional expertise including a technician funded by the EAZ who visits the school fortnightly to maintain the ICT provision.

In January 2006 the proposal to close the school was rescinded following a local campaign to keep it open. The LA has proposed that the school forms a 'hard' federation with another local school. The governing body are seeking a legal definition of this proposal.

## **Achievement and standards**

Standards remain below the national average. The school's assessment data shows significant underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. The inspection findings confirm this view. Since the last monitoring visit internal tracking data and scrutiny of work show some improvement in the rate of progress. Nonetheless, there continues to be an urgent need to address the gap between what the pupils are currently attaining and what they are capable of.

Following the last visit the school identified targets for the higher attaining pupils. However, these targets are unrealistic and not based on an accurate appraisal of the pupils' ability. Furthermore, although there is an improved focus on achievement, few pupils were unable to describe their targets or explain what demonstrated success in a lesson. The school still faces the major challenge of eliminating the high level of underachievement. Given the recent fall in numbers the school will need to set new and more accurate targets.

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

- ensure that all pupils achieve in line with their capabilities and attain higher standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT)—inadequate progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good. The consistent implementation of positive behaviour management strategies has had a good impact on pupils' behaviour around school and at playtimes. New play equipment has been purchased for lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy the various

activities organised by the lunchtime supervisors and spoke very enthusiastically about the 'Dancing Dinners' club. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory. Pupils are polite and well mannered and have good relationships with their teachers. However, too many pupils are passive learners and over dependent on adults.

Attendance for the autumn term was 94% which is in line with the national average for primary schools. The current term has been adversely affected by a city-wide flu virus which has resulted in a lower overall attendance figure of 93%. Although attendance is monitored regularly, and there is satisfactory support from the education social worker, more could be done to follow up absence on a daily basis. There has been an improvement in pupils' punctuality and good attendance is celebrated in class and by the whole school.

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

- improve attendance and behaviour—satisfactory progress.

### **Quality of provision**

From a low base the quality of teaching has improved since November 2005 and is generally satisfactory. However, there is not enough consistently good teaching. The best lessons seen were well structured and carefully planned for pupils to extend their learning. Teaching assistants were thoughtfully deployed. Questioning was used well to probe children's understanding and plenary sessions reinforced and evaluated the pupils' learning.

There is still too much teaching which is not good enough. In the weaker lessons, teaching did not pay sufficient attention to what the pupils' needed to learn. There was low expectation for effort, work rate and presentation and insufficient challenge for pupils' lack of concentration. Too much of the work did not match the pupils' different starting points and capabilities.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning—satisfactory progress.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has remained positive throughout a recent very difficult period. She has worked in a determined and systematic way to address the areas for improvement. Since November 2005 she has taken a number of effective actions. She has readjusted the timescales in the action plan and established an appropriate system for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning including regular lesson observation and book scrutiny. There is a greater urgency and strategic focus on raising standards and tackling

underachievement. However, although the action plan is now 'back on track', the success criteria are still not sufficiently precise or measurable.

The headteacher has carried out a number of lesson observations throughout the school. Individual teachers have received verbal and written feedback and have been given clear targets for improvement. The joint observation carried out with HMI confirmed the headteacher's accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The two overseas teachers' contracts have been ended and an experienced teacher appointed. Two new core subject leaders are receiving an induction programme and support.

The senior management team has been strengthened by the arrival of the new deputy headteacher. She is released regularly from her teaching commitment in order to develop her leadership and management role in the school. Senior management meetings are regular and actions and decisions are adequately recorded. The subject leaders have gained a clearer understanding of their responsibilities and are benefiting from the input of the LA consultants in developing their subject leadership skills. There are plans to further develop these skills through joint lesson observations to enable them to carry out their monitoring and evaluation roles more fully.

The governing body continues to monitor the work of the school and has started to hold it to account for the standards achieved by the pupils. Several of the governors are taking advantage of the training available through the EAZ. They are keen to discuss the future of the school with the LA and are rightly concerned about the viability of setting a deficit budget in light of the ever diminishing numbers.

The school budget is being closely monitored and all additional spending agreed with the LA. The school still needs to review the high levels of spending on staffing and the LA is supporting the school with a review of the administrative staff.

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

- improve leadership and management and develop the roles of the deputy headteacher and subject leaders so that they are able to take a lead in raising standards—satisfactory progress
- ensure that finances are managed and used effectively to raise standards - satisfactory progress.

### **External support**

The LA is providing appropriate support to the school. The headteacher is receiving good support and challenge from an experienced headteacher mentor. The Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) is having a positive impact on classroom practice and staff continue to value the quality of support provided by the ISP coordinator. In January 2006 the LA carried out a

primary evaluative review and made some helpful recommendations regarding the monitoring and evaluation programme.

However, the LA is yet to provide the school with an amended statement of proposed action following the recent decision not to close the school. It is not clear what the plans are for the school especially in light of the viability of the small numbers of pupils currently on roll. The governors lack clarity about the LA intentions and are seeking clarification about the legal definition of a 'hard' federation. In addition, the repayment plan for the deficit budget has not been provided.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures is satisfactory.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection is satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

The priorities remain those identified in the inspection of April 2005. Within this, the school's most pressing priorities are to:

- review the targets for higher attaining pupils and ensure that all pupils are aware of and can articulate their targets for improvement
- improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by providing appropriate challenge for all pupils in every lesson.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, and the Director of Learning and Culture for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Linda Rockey  
**H M Inspector**