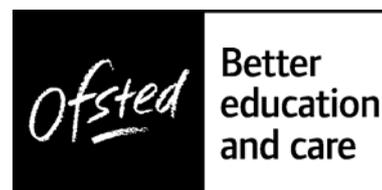


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Mrs C Lancey
The Headteacher
West Huntspill Community Primary School
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TA9 3QE

19 July 2006

Dear Mrs Lancey

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WEST HUNTSPILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 5 and 6 July 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 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

I observed the school's work, including four parts of lessons, visited the special resource base and attended an assembly. I scrutinised documents and looked at books, talked with the headteacher, and the teacher responsible for numeracy. I talked with the pupils and observed them at break and lunchtime.

Context

At the time of the monitoring inspection the two teachers who share the teaching of the Year 3/4 class were absent because of ill health and had been for several weeks. The special resource base manager, for pupils on the autistic spectrum, had died after a short illness. In the short term the school

has had to make temporary arrangements to run the base by increasing the number of teaching assistants and employing a teacher in the afternoons.

Achievement and standards

In the lessons observed standards were broadly in line with age related expectations but the more able pupils were not always given appropriately challenging work. The pupils in the special resource base continue to make satisfactory progress as a result of the good support they receive from additional adults.

Early indications of end of year teacher assessments and national tests are mixed. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 in reading and writing is broadly similar to last year but the proportion achieving the higher levels is significantly down. In mathematics the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 is significantly up but the higher level is down. At Key Stage 2, the national test results for pupils achieving the age related expectation are the same as last year in English, down in science and significantly up in mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels has risen in the three core subjects, particularly in English.

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

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science – inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

The pupils continue to behave very well and have positive attitudes to their work. Attendance has continued to improve and was 93.8% for the spring term. The school policy is to authorise only one holiday a year, further holidays are recorded as unauthorised absence. The introduction of certificates for 100% attendance for each half term has proved popular with the pupils and the number issued has doubled. The midday supervisors report that the pupils are very calm and polite at lunchtimes and that they play well together. The 'Golden Rules' are continuing to encourage appropriate behaviour. There have been no exclusions at the school since the last monitoring inspection and only two pupils have lost their 'Golden Time' and had to explain themselves to the headteacher.

The assembly observed during the visit was an enjoyable act of collective worship as well as a valuable occasion to remind the pupils of the school's aims for them. The headteacher skilfully used a gardening theme to discuss with the children the kinds of pupils she wanted in school. Opportunities for spiritual development were more obvious in lessons. A Year 5/6 visit to a synagogue provided a stimulating basis for a good lesson that combined both art and religious education.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved. The teaching was good in two of the lessons observed and satisfactory in two. The two satisfactory lessons suffered from too slow a pace. The quality of lesson planning has improved with a much closer match of assessment opportunities related to lesson learning objectives. The use of the interactive whiteboards has improved but they remain underexploited. The quality of marking has improved with more details of what pupils need to do to progress. Lesson planning is beginning to be informed by the improved use of data but this remains an area for further improvement, in particular the consistent challenging of the more able pupils. The data from the termly tracking of pupils' results is being used well by the senior leadership team to question and inform planning.

In a good lesson in mixed Foundation Stage/Year 1 class the pupils were confident in making the number bonds for 10 and were increasingly successful in transferring this knowledge to shopping and giving change. The more able pupils were able to give change from 20 pence. In the special resources base the pupils require constant supervision and, as the base is not staffed on a one to one basis, this requires constant vigilance from the staff. The infinite patience of the teaching assistants and their commitment to the pupils' learning is enabling the pupils to make useful gains in their social and academic skills.

The school recently held a successful science week to reinforce the greater emphasis being given to pupil investigation in the new programme of work. In English, significant progress has been made in the pupils' presentation of work through the consistent application of a handwriting strategy. In mathematics a sensible emphasis has been given to problem solving as this has been identified from the school's analysis of the 2005 end of year test results as an area of weakness.

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 – satisfactory
- make full use of the information gained from checking pupils' progress to improve planning and provide challenging work in lessons – satisfactory

Leadership and management

The headteacher has managed a very challenging term well and continues to provide good leadership and management. Staff absence, its resolution, the consequences of the untimely death of the resource base manager, and the need to reduce the number of teaching assistants have all required considerable time and energy. The headteacher has coped admirably with these personnel issues at the same time as having to take on the leadership

of science and keep a watching brief on literacy in the co-ordinator's absence subjects and move the school forward through special measures.

The teacher in charge of numeracy has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the pupils' progress and her detailed analysis of data from national tests is being used to good effect to revise the schemes of work for mathematics. The work of the literacy coordinator will be evaluated at the next monitoring inspection.

The governing body has continued to provide good support to the school. Training in developing the governors' roles is helping governors to ask more challenging questions of the school.

There have been a number of improvements to the fabric of the school including a remodelling of the food technology area and new blinds throughout. Some classrooms have been redecorated and more storage space has been built. The learning environment has also been improved by the enhanced quality of display work.

The school has a much better idea of how well it is doing. In addition to the use of the assessment and performance tracker, teachers are regularly observed and given feedback. The pupils' work and the teachers' planning are scrutinised with teachers giving a half termly account of their planning to the headteacher.

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.

External support

The school reports that it has received good support from the local authority. Additional funding has recently been allocated to assist the school in delivering the post Ofsted action plan.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.
Progress since the last monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

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