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Ms Christine Pyke  
The Headteacher  
Grendon Junior and Infant School  
Grendon Road  
Birmingham  
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19 June 2006

Dear Ms Pyke

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF GRENDON JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Sheila Boyle, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 June 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 September 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, deputy headteacher, assessment coordinator, members of the new leadership team, a group of pupils, the chair of governors, and two representatives from the local authority (LA).

### **Context**

Since the first monitoring visit in February 2006, two full time teachers and one part time teacher have left the school. These positions are currently filled by short term supply teachers. Permanent teachers have been appointed for all three posts from September 2006.

## **Achievement and standards**

Standards at Key Stage 2 remain below average particularly in writing. Teacher assessments for the current Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics show a further drop in standards from the previous year and unsatisfactory progress since Year 2. The school has recognised that it is unlikely to meet the challenging targets set for this year.

The school's own monitoring information indicates that the progress the majority of pupils make in writing at Key Stage 2 has improved recently. However, progress in mathematics has not improved sufficiently. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations and a scrutiny of work, shows that there are still wide variations in standards and progress both within, and between, year groups in both writing and mathematics. Whilst a proportion of pupils within each year group are working at expected levels and make satisfactory progress in writing and in number work, too many are still failing to make the progress of which they are capable.

A significant number of pupils still have gaps in their learning. The school is developing comprehensive arrangements for assessing, recording and tracking the pupils' attainment, but the information is not being used well enough to address the needs of those identified as underachieving.

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

The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful to adults and cooperate well with each other. They take turns to speak in discussions, expressing their feelings clearly and listening well to the views of others. They enjoy the more effective lessons and participate enthusiastically in a range of well planned and exciting activities. They are keen to answer questions and appreciate the praise they receive from their teachers. In some lessons pupils lack concentration and become restless because activities are uninteresting.

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and especially like the lessons where they take part in work which includes practical activities. However, a significant minority of pupils feel unhappy about the number of different teachers that they have. As one pupil said, 'I don't like it when they don't know your name and call you "you"'. Another said, 'Sometimes they give us the wrong work.'

## **Quality of provision**

The quality of teaching has improved since the last visit. Although there is now less unsatisfactory teaching, there is not enough that is good. Initiatives introduced by the school to improve the quality of teaching are beginning to help pupils to learn more. Planning is more consistent and teachers and pupils have a clearer understanding of what the pupils are to learn. However, in too many lessons teachers do not take sufficient account of what the pupils already know and work is not carefully matched to pupils' individual abilities.

In the few good lessons, pupils make good progress because the teachers have a good understanding of what the pupils know and use their good subject knowledge to move pupils on in their learning. They use a good range of teaching strategies to motivate the pupils and lessons move on at a brisk pace.

Progress in many mathematics lessons is too slow because teachers do not have a good enough understanding about the subject and how to develop pupils' learning. Frequently teachers do not take sufficient account of the levels the pupils should be working at. Work is often too easy or too hard for many pupils. Not enough opportunities are planned for pupils to learn independently or to undertake practical and investigative work.

Marking is inconsistent and teachers rarely give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve the content and presentation of their work. The majority of pupils' work is poorly presented. The school has recently introduced a system of setting targets to help pupils improve their work. However, many pupils do not have a clear understanding of what their targets are or of what they need to do to improve.

Some recent curriculum initiatives, including the introduction of talking partners and the provision of 'times tables clubs' are already having a positive effect. There are signs of improvement in pupils' speaking and listening skills and knowledge of multiplication tables. Teachers are increasingly providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing and number skills in other curriculum areas.

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

- improve the teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5 in order to raise standards in mathematics and writing – satisfactory
- increase the amount of mathematics and writing carried out across the different subjects in Years 3 to 6 – satisfactory.

### **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the school have improved significantly since the last monitoring visit. The headteacher has set a clear, educational direction and the drive to raise standards is shared by members of the newly appointed senior leadership team. Sensible decisions have been made with regard to staffing in order to eradicate some of the unsatisfactory teaching. However, the school's self-evaluation is still not sufficiently evaluative. Senior leaders carry out frequent monitoring activities including reviews of pupils' work and observations of lessons. However, the planning for these activities is not sufficiently systematic. The reports written are too descriptive, with little evaluation. Targets for improvement are set, but these are not followed up sufficiently rigorously to bring about rapid improvements in teaching and learning.

The subject leaders for English and mathematics have made effective use of assessment information to identify areas of underachievement. They have implemented a number of strategies to improve teaching and learning, such as a consistent approach to planning and the sharing of learning outcomes with children. However, monitoring activities are not sufficiently systematic to ensure that these good intentions are carried out consistently throughout the school. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make are not improving quickly enough in most classes. However, the introduction of 'times table clubs' has been popular with staff and pupils. This is helping pupils in Key Stage 2 to make good progress with multiplication skills.

The school's system to track the progress of individual pupils is helpful in identifying where progress is at least satisfactory and where there are areas of underachievement. However, this information is not being used sufficiently well to address all areas of weakness quickly enough.

The governing body is effective in holding the school to account. As a body and through the strategy group, the school is being asked challenging questions. The headteacher provides frequent, detailed and frank reports of the progress the school is making. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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

- carry out more rigorous monitoring of the school's work, especially teaching, to identify and tackle problems at an earlier stage – inadequate.

### **External support**

The local authority has improved its action plan and it is now satisfactory. Actions have been planned to support the school throughout the period of special measures. However, many of the planned interventions lack precision and few of the success criteria are clearly measurable. This is likely to make it difficult for the LA to assess the impact of its work.

The LA has developed an effective working partnership with the school. Support with staffing issues, leadership, governance, and improving the quality of teaching and learning have all helped the school to move forward. However, the latest evaluative review by the LA does not provide the school with a sufficiently rigorous evaluation of teaching and learning to enable it to improve as quickly as it could.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Quality of LA's statement of action – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

**Priorities for further improvement**

- Raise expectations about the quality of teaching; supporting and challenging teachers to meet these by making best use of the available resources.
- Make self-evaluation more systematic and rigorous in order to eradicate unsatisfactory teaching and eliminate underachievement.

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

Mark Mumby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**