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Mr D Lawrence
The Headteacher
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30 June 2006

Dear Mr Lawrence

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KINGSLAND CE (C) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Marion Wallace, Additional Inspector, to your school on 21 and 22 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 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 and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the chair and vice chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

There have been no significant changes in the school's context since the inspection in October 2005.

Achievement and standards

Standards observed in lessons are still below average. However, pupils in many lessons were observed to be making better progress than at the time of the previous monitoring visit. Progress was seen to be good in eight lessons and satisfactory in the five others observed by inspectors. It is too soon for the improved progress to have had an impact on overall standards. The school is predicting that its national test results in 2006 will be similar to last year and will remain poor in comparison to national averages. Monitoring of test results by the school predicts that standards will rise in national tests in 2007.

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

- improve pupils' achievement, especially that of the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, by ensuring that teaching and the curriculum meet their needs – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Most pupils enjoy school and the activities planned for them. During a visit from the local Fire Service, younger children showed great delight climbing onto the driver's seat of the fire engine whilst others got to hold the hose. Older pupils were equally intrigued to learn about fire prevention and safety. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There are appropriate opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility. There is a sound focus on the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils are able to select healthy choices for their lunch and a range of fruit is available on the fruit stall. The school council meets regularly and members have helped improve the school environment. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider community.

Behaviour remains good in lessons and during break times. Pupils are polite and show consideration for others. The school gives clear guidance on how to behave. Attitudes to learning often reflect the quality of teaching. Pupils show enthusiasm for their work when the teaching is good. When tasks are dull some pupils become inattentive. Attendance remains below average but is steadily improving. The school works hard to improve attendance through awards and certificates. Attendance is monitored closely and parents are soon contacted when there are concerns.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning has improved since the last monitoring visit and all lessons observed were either satisfactory or better. Teaching and learning was good in eight lessons and satisfactory in five lessons. Teaching has improved because lessons are now planned systematically. Lesson plans now identify clearly what the pupils will learn and work is well matched to pupils'

abilities. However, more able pupils are still not sufficiently challenged. Teaching assistants make a good contribution in supporting small groups and individuals. The training teaching assistants have received has clarified their role. They are now proactive in lessons and interact well with pupils who need extra support. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection and, consequently, achievement in these groups is better. There are adequate procedures to check on the progress pupils make. Teachers mostly use this information well to match work to ability. Marking is regular but it does not always inform pupils sufficiently about what they need to do to improve.

In the best lessons good relationships and good classroom management help to create the right atmosphere for learning. Work is well matched to pupils' differing needs and it challenges pupils so that they respond and learn well. This is not the case in all lessons. Where teaching is less effective, the work is unchallenging and does not stretch all pupils. There is now more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning which confirms inspection evidence that teaching is consistently better in Years 3, 4 and 5. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teachers do not plan small, achievable learning activities to make it easier for younger children to progress. The school has not planned rigorously how it will improve pupils' writing skills.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The recent move away from teaching topics to focus on subjects instead is beginning to contribute to an overall improvement in achievement. In the Foundation Stage the curriculum meets the needs of children in all areas of learning. The school provides well for health education. The teaching of information and communication technology is enhanced by the computer suite but teachers are not making effective use of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms. There is an adequate programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Visitors such as the Fire Service and local church leaders enrich pupils' experiences. The school offers a satisfactory range of lunchtime and after school activities. There are plans to extend what is offered.

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

- improve pupils' achievement, especially that of the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, by ensuring that teaching and the curriculum meet their needs – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Following the last monitoring visit the school has acted with urgency to bring about improvement. The improvement plan, which was previously inadequate, is now satisfactory. It clearly specifies the actions the school will take, the timescales within which activity will occur, and the expected improvements which it will bring about. However, the current plan only runs until the end of the academic year. The school is aware that extending the

plan to the end of next year is a priority and has been awaiting the recommendations of this monitoring visit before commencing work on it.

Actions taken by the leadership of the school have brought about clear improvements. The school has made good progress in dealing with the recommendations from the last monitoring visit. Teachers now have lesson plans for every lesson. There is now a common understanding of what constitutes good teaching and teachers have individual guidance on how they can improve. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved. The impact of leadership and management is particularly evident in the better contribution teaching assistants are now able to make to learning. However, there is still much to do. The school recognises that sustaining and consolidating the improvements made remains a priority. As progress immediately following the inspection was inadequate, the school has made satisfactory progress overall since being made subject to special measures.

The governors have received the training they requested from the LA to help them monitor the progress of the school. Good procedures for monitoring are now in place. The governors now have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The appointment of the school development adviser as clerk to the governors is ensuring the governing body has good access to readily available expertise.

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

- improve pupils' achievement, especially that of the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, by ensuring that teaching and the curriculum meet their needs – satisfactory
- ensure that there is more rigorous monitoring of the school's work, especially teaching, to identify and tackle problems at an earlier stage – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority statement of action was rewritten following the last monitoring visit. It has been aligned with the school improvement plan and sets out the support the LA will provide to the school. Support is satisfactory and includes the provision of advisers, consultants, and additional funding. The quality of the LA's statement of action is now satisfactory.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – good.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teachers plan learning activities with small achievable steps;
 - planning more rigorously to improve writing;
 - providing more challenge in lessons for more able pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Stoke Local Authority.

Yours sincerely

David Anstead
H M Inspector