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29 November 2007

Mr David May
The Headteacher
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Dear Mr May

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BOSWORTH WOOD
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Rob Hubbleday HMI to your school on Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 November 2007, 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 May 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

No additional newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education and Children's Services for Solihull.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BOSWORTH WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 13 and 14 November 2007

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including 12 lessons and a school assembly. They scrutinised documents and pupils' books, and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior teachers, a literacy consultant, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

There have been significant changes to staffing. The governors appointed a newly qualified teacher (NQT) prior to the May 2007 inspection. Following this inspection three experienced teachers were also appointed. These teachers and the NQT took up post in September 2007. Subsequently, one experienced teacher left. The headteacher has redeployed the majority of the existing staff within the school. At the time of this inspection, seven of the nine teachers were teaching in an age group that was different from the one they taught previously. One nursery teaching assistant is absent through illness and this post is being covered by a temporary assistant. The LA has seconded a literacy consultant to lead on developments in speaking and listening and has appointed one additional governor.

Achievement and standards

The results of the most recent end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments were better than last year's, most notably in reading where standards were broadly average and the highest ever achieved by the school. Attainment in writing also improved but remained below age related expectations. Standards remained broadly average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was below the national figure in all three subjects.

At the end of Key Stage 2, the 2007 results did not show similar improvements. Attainment remained below average in English and science and was exceptionally low in mathematics where standards fell from broadly average in 2006. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was below the national figure in all three subjects. Pupils in Year 6 made inadequate progress from their starting points in Year 2.

Evidence from lesson observations indicates that recently pupils have begun to make better progress at the end of Key Stage 2, where there is some strong teaching. In addition, the LA has fostered improvements in the Foundation Stage by providing high levels of advisory support. The staff in the Reception and Nursery classes have responded well and their efforts to develop the curriculum, enhance the learning environment, and improve teaching are beginning to raise children's achievement.

Nevertheless, across the school, achievement remains inadequate. In too many lessons pupils fail to build satisfactorily on their knowledge and skills. The school's assessment information shows that high proportions of pupils in most year groups are not on track to meet their end of year targets.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- raise achievement, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, so that more pupils are able to reach nationally expected levels by the time they leave school – inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils continue to behave well and benefit from the range of support provided by the school. There is an effective system for identifying and supporting vulnerable pupils. Relationships between adults and pupils are good humoured. Attendance remains below average and the inclusion team continues to identify pupils and families in need of support. Children in the Foundation Stage work together well during teacher led and independent activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning remain inadequate despite recent training and development for staff. The inspection team observed more inadequate teaching than that identified by the school and the local authority. Half the lessons seen by inspectors were inadequate, with a higher proportion in Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, the small proportion of teaching that was good was all in this key stage. Teaching in Key Stage 1 ranged from satisfactory to inadequate.

Teaching has recently improved in the Foundation Stage and is now satisfactory. There is now an appropriate balance between teacher directed activities and those that children select for themselves. Teachers and support staff have clearly identified roles so that they can focus their attention on different groups of pupils. However, there are times when the input that children receive from adults is too brief to make a significant contribution to their learning.

Improvements have been made in promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills resulting from well focused training. In the better lessons, pupils have the opportunity to discuss what they are learning with a partner. In some classes, pupils extend their speaking and listening skills further by asking each other questions. However, this practice is inconsistent and there are too many occasions when teachers talk for too long and pupils remain passive during whole class introductions and the end of lessons.

Lesson planning has improved and now clearly identifies what the pupils will be expected to learn. The school has in place a sound system for tracking and monitoring the progress of individual pupils. However, this information is not consistently well used by staff. Although all staff use the same planning format, planning for different ability groups remains weak. Too often pupils are given similar tasks and asked the same questions. This results in a lack of challenge for the more

able or work that is too difficult for the least able. As a result, the progress that pupils make is too slow.

There is some good teaching in the school, but not enough to accelerate progress and eradicate underachievement. This was reported in the previous inspection. Where teaching is good, expectations are high, there is sufficient time for pupils to be actively engaged in their learning, teachers ask questions that challenge pupils' thinking, and teaching assistants are effectively deployed and provide an appropriate level of support to pupils. Teachers also give pupils the opportunity to evaluate their work and check that pupils understand their task. In one good lesson, the teacher used pupil feedback effectively to provide additional information before asking pupils to work independently. This helped them to make good progress. In the weaker lessons, pupils are not clear about what they need to do by the end of the lesson, they are not shown how to complete their work and the pace of learning is slow.

Pupils' work is regularly marked and some teachers' comments are helpful and encouraging. Nevertheless, there is an insufficient focus on providing pupils with the guidance they need to improve their work further and correct their errors.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- promote pupils' speaking and listening skills to help improve their learning in all subjects – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management remain inadequate. The school has not tackled its key issues with sufficient urgency and, despite a few improvements, in the way in which the senior team is structured and operates; the school is not strongly led. Self-evaluation is weak and the senior team is not fully aware of the limited impact the recent actions have had on the quality of provision and pupils' progress. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are heavily reliant on external support and have not demonstrated that the school has the capacity to make the necessary changes. Improvements, such as the development of speaking and listening, have been largely driven by a seconded literacy consultant. The school improvement plan was written by the headteacher and deputy headteacher with assistance from an associate headteacher. A LA advisory teacher wrote the draft Foundation Stage action plan.

The recently developed procedures for monitoring the work of the school are potentially sound. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of the school leadership team have checked teachers' planning and pupils' work, analysed assessment information and observed all staff. However, once weaknesses have been identified they have not been tackled with determined and urgent action. There have not been enough checks on the quality of teaching and feedback to staff has made insufficient reference to the impact of actions on pupils' performance. For example, written feedback to teachers following the checking of pupils' work does not provide teachers with the guidance they need to accelerate pupil progress.

For several years the school has had a suitable system to monitor pupils' progress and set targets. However, the use of this assessment information is still,

unacceptably, at its early stages. The senior staff have not analysed this information in a format that will provide them with a clear overview of pupils' achievement. Similarly, this system has not had a sufficient impact on teachers' planning and target setting for pupils. The more able pupils have only recently been sent challenging targets. The school improvement plan provides a sound framework for further improvement. Whilst the senior staff keep a close check on the completion of actions in the plan, they do not give enough attention to the impact of these actions on pupils' progress.

Since the previous inspection, governors have met regularly and have received information about the quality of teaching and learning. The chair of governors reports that members of the governing body are beginning to ask more questions about the school's performance. The governing body set up a scrutiny committee to monitor the work of the school prior to the previous inspection. This committee met during the week of the inspection to agree the terms of reference. Despite these recent developments, the governing body has been too slow to take action and hold the school to account for the progress made by the pupils.

The school and the LA have provided the NQT with the necessary support and training.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- establish a clear sense of direction and a plan for the school which demonstrates how it intends to meet its aims and the aspirations of the wider community – inadequate
- carry out rigorous and systematic checks on the quality of teaching in order to address identified weaknesses and increase the proportion of good teaching – inadequate.

External support

The local authority's statement of action is satisfactory. The LA has made revisions to its original statement of action. It has made clear how far it was aware of the school's problems before the inspection in May 2007. It has also identified the different personnel that will monitor and evaluate the school's performance. Despite some useful advisory support, the impact of the LA's work has been inadequate. In particular, the weaknesses in leadership and management, including governance, were not identified quickly enough and have not formed a suitably key feature of the statement of action. In addition, there has been some lack of clarity about the location and extent of weaknesses in teaching.

Priorities for further improvement

There are no further priorities for improvement. The school should address the key areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007 with greater rigour and an increased sense of urgency.