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3 March 2008

Mrs M Orson
The Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Orson

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

Following my visit with Peter Isherwood, Additional Inspector, to your school on 20 and 21 February 2008, 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 May 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not 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 the Interim Executive Board and the Director of the Children's Service for Solihull.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BOSWORTH WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 20 and 21 February 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work. They scrutinised documents and pupils' books, met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior teachers, a literacy consultant, the school council, a representative from the Interim Executive Board (IEB), and representatives from the local authority (LA).

Context

The headteacher resigned at the end of the autumn term 2007 and was replaced by an interim headteacher, who works at the school four days a week. The deputy headteacher assumes the role of acting headteacher for the remaining one day. The Year 4 teacher left in December 2007 and was replaced with a temporary teacher. A temporary teacher was also appointed in February 2008 to cover a maternity leave. The LA has replaced the governing body with an IEB. Six members have been recently appointed and are expecting to meet at the end of this month to formally ratify this arrangement.

Achievement and standards

Standards are steadily rising and progress accelerating. A scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence from lesson observations confirm that the decline in pupils' achievement has been halted. This is due to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the use of support staff to provide individuals and groups of pupils with targeted support. Rates of progress for the children in Reception and Nursery continue to improve. Here, children make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress. The majority of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are now making generally satisfactory progress and a small proportion in Years 5 and 6 is making good progress. Whilst achievement is clearly improving, pupils in all year groups are capable of making faster progress and reaching higher standards, particularly in writing.

The school's assessment information shows that standards are steadily rising but remain well below the national average due to the legacy of underachievement. The proportions of pupils that are expected to reach their end of year targets have increased from the previous year, most noticeably in Year 6. In comparison with 2007, an increasing number of Year 6 pupils are expected to reach Level 4 in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Throughout the school, standards in reading and mathematics are moving more quickly towards the national average than in writing. The school is aware that more needs to be done to raise standards of writing and has identified this as a priority for improvement.

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 – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Relationships between adults and pupils remain positive. Pupils are particularly enjoying the increased opportunities to work with a partner during lessons because this gives them the chance to discuss and develop their ideas. Support staff play a valuable role in identifying and supporting pupils with specific emotional and social needs. This is continuing to have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. Despite the work of the school's inclusion team, attendance remains below the national average.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved and ranges from outstanding to inadequate. Since the previous monitoring visit there has been a marked increase in the proportion of satisfactory and better lessons and a significant reduction in the number of inadequate lessons. Over two thirds of lessons seen by inspectors were satisfactory or better. Consequently, the progress that pupils are now making has improved and is generally satisfactory. However, there are still too few lessons that are consistently good or better and, as a result, the progress that pupils make is not as fast as it could be. In the better lessons, teachers demonstrate what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. They also ask questions that encourage pupils to evaluate their own work against the lesson outcomes. Learning accelerated when pupils were fully engaged in their learning. In the weaker lessons, pupils are set tasks that are either too difficult or too easy and some pupils are not clear about what they have to do in a lesson.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage has continued to improve and is satisfactory with good features. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are making effective use of assessment information to provide children with tasks that meet their learning and developmental needs. Whilst adults are deployed effectively to work with groups of children, they occasionally miss the opportunity to develop children's literacy and mathematical skills.

A local authority consultant has continued to work with staff to further embed activities that promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. The majority of staff are now consistently giving pupils the opportunity to talk about their work with a partner. In the better lessons staff give pupils the chance to ask each other questions and evaluate each other's work by discussing strengths and ways in which their work could be improved. The pupils are also learning to take on a range of roles while working in a group. However, this good practice is not yet consistent throughout the school.

Lesson planning has improved and staff are beginning to use assessment information to identify tasks for different ability groups. They are also identifying speaking and listening opportunities in their lessons. However, the tasks for the more able pupils continue to lack challenge and, in some classes, tasks do not sufficiently build on the pupils' previous learning. The overuse of undemanding worksheets in some classes is

preventing pupils from extending their learning. For example, worksheets are preventing pupils from writing at length and developing their ideas because the pupils are only required to record limited responses.

Despite the recent introduction of individual learning targets, the use of these is inconsistent. In many cases teachers do not make sufficient reference to the pupils' targets in their marking or during lessons. Consequently, pupils are unsure about the steps they need to take to achieve their individual learning targets.

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 have improved and been significantly strengthened by the work of the interim headteacher. The interim headteacher provides good leadership and is effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, a range of LA consultants and the school's LA link adviser. Together they have identified and addressed weaknesses in teaching and developed systems for monitoring the work of the school.

The interim headteacher has established a clearer direction for the school by involving all staff in a review of the school improvement plan. As a result, all staff have an increased understanding of their role in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The subject leader actions plans are sound. Whilst they reflect the priorities in the main school improvement plan, they do not make a clear link between actions and impact on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The plans do not always make clear how progress will be monitored and evaluated to secure improvement.

The deputy headteacher and the other members of the senior leadership team are beginning to increase their involvement in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. However, this is still in its early stages and they continue to rely on the interim headteacher and external consultants for advice and support. Consequently, their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school is satisfactory. The interim headteacher is aware of this and, in collaboration with the LA, has secure plans in place to further develop leadership roles within the school.

The school's work is being monitored more effectively than previously. The deputy headteacher, LA adviser and LA consultant have observed lessons and provided teachers with individual guidance and action points. They have also indicated when teachers are expected to improve their work and who will support them to achieve their action points. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching.

The deputy headteacher and senior staff have checked teachers' planning and pupils' work. However, the feedback given is inconsistent and lacks rigour. On too many occasions the feedback to staff about their planning and pupils' work is too general and does not give staff the guidance they need to improve their practice and accelerate pupils' progress.

The deputy headteacher has improved the systems for monitoring pupils' progress. With the interim headteacher, she has analysed the progress made by pupils in the autumn term. They are using this information effectively to identify pupils who need additional support. However, they are aware that this information needs to be moderated as a matter of urgency so that they can accurately measure progress throughout the school.

Inspectors met with a representative from the IEB. She is a headteacher of a local school and has experience of working in a school subject to special measures. The representative has a very clear understanding of the issues facing the school.

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 – satisfactory
- carry out rigorous and systematic checks on the quality of teaching in order to address identified weaknesses and increase the proportion of good teaching – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has provided a good level of support since the previous monitoring inspection. It has acted with a sense of urgency to confront the weaknesses in governance by using their full range of powers. The LA has also secured the appointment of an interim headteacher from a local successful school. This has strengthened the school's capacity to improve further and is having a beneficial impact on the quality of leadership and management. The LA has committed itself to providing the school with the same level of support in the summer term. The school's LA link adviser and consultants provide good support with monitoring the school's performance and providing teachers with the advice they need to accelerate pupils' progress. This has helped to significantly reduce the proportion of inadequate teaching in the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to develop the monitoring and evaluative roles of the senior leadership team to ensure they provide staff with the guidance they need to further improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Secure a reliable baseline for evaluating pupils' progress by improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments in Key Stages 1 and 2.