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23 June 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 David Westall, Additional Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 June 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third 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 Services for Solihull.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BOSWORTH WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 11 and 12 June 2008

Evidence

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

Context

Since the time of the last monitoring visit there have been a number of staffing changes. The Year 4 class and one Year 6 class have had a number of temporary teachers. One full time teacher in Year 2 was redeployed in April 2008 to provide additional support for pupils identified in need of a nurture group in Key Stage 1. As a result, the Year 1 teacher was deployed to teach a Year 2 class and a permanent teacher was appointed to teach the Year 1 class. The Reception class teacher was absent during this visit.

Achievement and standards

The school's assessment information, some of which has been moderated, shows that a majority of pupils are continuing to make at least satisfactory progress and some are making good progress. Rates of progress for children in the Foundation Stage are accelerating and the proportion of children making good progress and beginning to work within the performance levels expected for their age has markedly increased. The children in the Foundation Stage are making better progress than 2007, particularly in personal development and mathematical skills.

Evidence from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that rates of progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 have been sustained. Although the majority of pupils continue to make generally satisfactory and sometime good progress, pupils are not making consistently fast enough progress in all classes and in all subjects. In the majority of lessons seen the progress of more able pupils could have been accelerated. The school has recently reviewed the curriculum in order to increase the opportunities pupils have to develop their writing skills. However, the implementation of this revised curriculum has been inconsistent and consequently progress in writing continues to lag behind reading and mathematics.

The school's assessment data shows that although standards are gradually rising in reading and mathematics, they remain low in most year groups. Standards in writing are rising too slowly. In comparison to 2007, a greater percentage of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are expected to reach the nationally expected levels for their ages in reading and mathematics. Nonetheless, lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the more able pupils in all year groups are capable of attaining higher standards.

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

Pupils speak positively about the adults they work with. They behave well in lessons and work together effectively. They listen carefully to each others' ideas and respect differences of opinion during discussions. Teachers have effectively increased pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles. The school has recently introduced class targets and a range of rewards to encourage good attendance. In addition, the school's learning mentor role has been extended so that the attendance of specific families can be checked and support offered. Nevertheless, attendance remains below the national average, and too many parents are choosing to take their children on holiday during term time.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons is satisfactory. While there has been a slight increase in the proportion of good lessons, there is not enough consistently good teaching to accelerate pupils' progress in all year groups. The strongest teaching is in Nursery and for some pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2. In the better lessons, the teachers are using assessment information to match work accurately to pupils' different learning needs. They are providing pupils with the opportunity to review and evaluate their work with a partner. This is helping pupils to correct errors in the work of each other and identify their next steps in learning. Teaching assistants are working effectively with the teacher to provide pupils with specific support.

The majority of teachers are now ensuring that they give clear explanations and share the learning objective for the lesson. As a result, pupils usually settle quickly and know what is expected from them by the end of the lesson. Nevertheless, there remain some weaknesses that are restricting pupils' progress. In too many lessons, the activities for the more able pupils do not sufficiently build on their prior knowledge and are not challenging enough. This is a persistent weakness in the school that has not been addressed with sufficient urgency. Teachers do not always use questions effectively to check pupils' understanding or extend their thinking. Occasionally, pupils who are working independently are left alone for too long and staff miss the opportunity to provide them with the guidance they need to make accelerated progress.

An increasing number of staff are extending pupils' speaking and listening skills by giving pupils good opportunities to reflect on their work and discuss their ideas. The staff are also encouraging pupils to explain the strategies they have used to complete their task. However, this good practice is inconsistent. In too many lessons, teachers readily accepted brief responses from the pupils. This is restricting the development of pupils' vocabulary and communication skills.

Teachers are placing a greater emphasis on pupils' learning targets during discussions with pupils. As a result, most pupils have a clear understanding of their targets. However, pupils' involvement in reviewing their progress towards these targets is still in its early stages. Teachers' marking has improved and includes more detailed feedback. Nonetheless, when weaknesses have been correctly identified they are not followed up rigorously in future marking. Consequently, pupils continue to make similar errors in their work.

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

The interim headteacher continues to promote a positive attitude towards change. As a result, teachers are becoming more confident with implementing new ways of working and reviewing their practice. Since the last visit, suitable actions have been taken to moderate assessment information. The interim headteacher and deputy headteacher have recently introduced assessment meetings to discuss the progress of pupils with teachers and senior staff. These meetings are an important development in the school. They are beginning to help staff gain a better understanding of the levels their pupils are working at and the actions they need to take to accelerate progress. Local authority consultants have worked with staff to check teacher assessments so that they more accurately reflect the current level of pupils' work. The deputy headteacher is in the process of analysing the moderated assessment information more effectively so that staff can track the progress of different groups of learners and better meet pupils' individual learning needs.

Leadership and management at all levels have benefited from the continued support from the local authority consultants and the school's LA advisor. The deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team are now systematically monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. They are observing lessons, checking pupils' work and teachers' planning. Their feedback to staff has improved and includes some useful guidance to help improve teachers' practice. This, combined with the support from the LA consultants, has resulted in a slight improvement in the proportion of good teaching. However, further work is required to ensure all senior staff focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement in lessons and use this information to set staff specific targets for improvement.

Self-evaluation is broadly satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation of progress since the previous monitoring visit identifies which actions from the school improvement plan and individual action plans have been completed and what more needs to be done to improve provision. This has helped to ensure all staff have maintained a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, self-evaluation is sometimes too generous because it does not use all the available evidence from monitoring or the analysis of pupils' assessment data to critically evaluate the impact of the school's actions on pupils' learning. The interim headteacher is aware that more needs to be done to ensure self-evaluation is rigorous and used to bring about rapid improvement.

The IEB has very quickly established a very good understanding of the issues facing the school. The members are beginning to challenge the work of the school and hold the school to account for the progress made by pupils. The chair of the IEB provides a good level of support and is asking challenging questions about the school's performance.

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 continued to provide a good range of support since the previous monitoring visit. The school's LA link advisor and consultants have responded positively to the school's request to provide additional targeted support. Local authority personnel have worked well with the school to increase the involvement of senior staff in monitoring performance, consolidate the developments in the Foundation Stage, and moderate teacher assessments. Despite the good level of support, less success has been achieved in raising standards, particularly for the more able and in writing.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels rigorously evaluate the impact of actions in order to bring about more rapid improvement.
- Accelerate the rate of progress for all pupils, especially in writing and for the more able.