

15 July 2008

Mrs Melanie Clapton
Interim Headteacher
Chadwell St Mary Primary School
River View
Chadwell St Mary
Grays
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RM16 4DH

Dear Mrs Clapton

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CHADWELL ST MARYS SCHOOL

Following my visit to your school on 1st and 2nd July 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 July 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

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 governors and the Director of Education for Children, Education and Families for Thurrock.

Yours sincerely

George Falconer
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF CHADWELL SAINT MARYS SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 2 July 2008

Evidence

HMI observed lessons, scrutinised documents and held discussions with the interim headteacher, subject co-ordinators, staff, a group of pupils, the chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and representatives from the local authority (LA).

Context

The school staffing remains in a similar situation to the previous visit with the full compliment of permanent staff still not secure. There is not a substantive headteacher or a substantive deputy headteacher in post. There are 3.5 teachers leaving at the end of this term.

The substantive headteacher has now retired from the post after being absent since the start of the Summer term, 2007. Two interim headteachers have held responsibility for the leadership and management of this school since the beginning of the academic year, taking up their responsibilities in September 2007 and April 2008 respectively; the current person will lead the school until a substantive headteacher can be appointed. Currently there are nine staff of which four are permanent, three of whom are on full time contracts. Two staff members are seconded and two are on a fixed term contract.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are not yet satisfactory although there is some evidence of accelerated progress being made in some of the classes as a result of the concerted efforts by staff and particularly the interim headteacher. The lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to good. The majority are satisfactory.

The progress being made in most lessons by the majority of the pupils is satisfactory overall. However, a lot of ground has yet to be covered before the past underachievement of pupils is eradicated. Some pupils make good progress.

The current interim headteacher agrees that progress made by children in the Foundation stage is now good with most of them exceeding expectation against the early learning goals. This is due, in part, to the accompanying support of an Early Years consultant working alongside the Foundation Stage leader. There are sixteen children in the class, most of which have made good progress within the early learning goals.

From the school's data and from inspection observations, overall achievement of pupils is below expected levels. The unvalidated 2008 Key Stage 1 test results are likely to be well below the national average. Evidence in books illustrates that most

pupils' work is below expected levels with writing skills underdeveloped; presentation of work is often poor. The quality of pupils' writing is an issue for the school with the end of Year 2 results showing well below the expected levels and no pupils obtaining a higher level 3. Reading scores are better than the writing scores but still well below average. The school recognises the urgent need to develop these areas at Key Stage 1 and to continue it through to Key Stage 2. Results in mathematics in Key Stage 1 are better than in reading and writing with a higher percentage of pupils reaching level 3. However, the level 2 and level 3 scores are still well below the national average.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is predicted to be well below the national average. However, progress within the Year six group, from the school's data, has improved.

The overall progress pupils make in lessons is varied and very much dependent on the quality of planning, teaching and learning, assessment for learning and the levels of engagement. However, there is still a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school and a lack of consistency in using and applying procedures for gauging pupils' levels.

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

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science and accelerate the progress pupils make – inadequate

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well being is satisfactory but attendance figures are well below average. Most pupils attend school and arrive on time but there are still a number of pupils who arrive late.

Attitudes to learning vary with many pupils stating that they enjoy their education; a minority say that some of the lessons are not as good as others. However, attitudes to learning in most lessons are good. There is an improvement overall since the last monitoring visit and the majority of pupils are keen to do well and to progress in their learning.

Although pupils' behaviour is improving, observations still point to some low level disruption. Pupils state that bad behaviour and bullying still occurs but not a much as before. During the course of the inspection there was no evidence of any bad behaviour or bullying.

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

- Improve pupils' attendance – inadequate

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning varies from satisfactory to good with most being satisfactory. The quality of learning is directly related to the quality of the teaching. This in turn is related to the quality of the planning and assessment for learning. Although planning has improved, the inspection agrees with the school's judgement that improvements are still necessary in the delivery of the lessons in order to raise achievement and standards to at least a satisfactory level across the year groups.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage has noticeably improved and the additional specialist support from the local authority is a positive move to securing children's further progress in learning. The improved quality of teaching and learning is reflected in the good levels of progress made within the early learning goals by the majority of children.

Children are now being given much more responsibility in their learning and are showing that they can make decisions. This is mainly as a result of the move towards more child initiated activities, which also allows for more accurate assessment of progress within the areas of learning.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the quality of provision is satisfactory overall. The development and the implementation of the planning for the different groups are better but there are still inconsistencies. In most lessons, the learning intentions are clear but in others pupils are not quite sure of expectations. Differentiation is planned to varying degrees but not always evident in the actual learning process. Assessment for learning is satisfactory in most instances but not yet firmly established across the school.

Teaching assistants carry out a satisfactory job on the whole but are more engaging in some classes than in others. Where good practice is evident, there is noticeable initiative being shown by staff with confidence in their teaching support roles; this visibly drives the learning forward.

Where the quality of teaching is good, the teacher is confident and engaging. Pupils are attentive and respond well. Behaviour is checked often and pupils are well aware of expectations and boundaries for levels of behaviour. The pace of the lesson is good and pupils waste little time. The teacher alerts pupils to the available time left and repeats the high levels of expectation. The interest levels for both boys and girls are good and the differentiation for pupils of differing abilities is better than in other classes. Teaching assistants are effective and visibly drive the learning forward for the pupils in their groups.

Where the quality of teaching and learning is broadly satisfactory, sometimes the pace is slow and pupil behaviour is not good. Some pupils are unaware of their targets and how those targets relate to the lesson and to their overall progress. Marking is generally satisfactory but there are inconsistencies. However, there is also evidence of good practice. The quality of the starts and ends to lessons is satisfactory; however, the plenary at the end of one lesson was effective. It was engaging, pupils were attentive, responded well and gave the teacher a good understanding of progress made.

Pupil's knowledge of their targets and what they need to do in order to improve progress towards those targets varies and is often not adequate enough to allow them to engage in the necessary thought processes in order to bring about improvement.

The general environment around the school is much improved and there is much more evidence of displays of pupils' work playing a more important part in their learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enhanced in some areas. For example, the French lessons pupils receive are engaging and bring enjoyment to the pupils' learning. The developing addition of the garden area to the Foundation Stage is a real asset and gives the children the opportunity to become practically involved. They are beginning to understand about plants, growth and change. There are some very keen Foundation Stage gardeners as well as parent gardeners. Produce from the garden, such as the lettuce, is tried and tested by the school.

Care guidance and support is satisfactory and the school works very hard to improve the levels of attendance of pupils. Child protection procedures and health and safety procedures are duly dealt with.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2007

- Improve the provision in the Foundation Stage – satisfactory

Leadership and management

Leadership and management remains at a temporary, interim level with the third interim headteacher appointed by the local authority (LA). The third interim headteacher has been in post since April 2008 and has already made considerable, positive impact on the overall provision. Pupils state that the school is gradually becoming a better place to be and that the teachers are supporting them better in their learning. However, the short span of time has not yet given enough substantial opportunity to fully monitor the quality of the overall provision, acquire a full analysis of needs or to give the school a sustained period of continuity under one headteacher. The good quality of the senior leadership is therefore not yet impacting strongly enough on the outcomes in order to see a notable rise in achievement and standards across the school. However, strategic plans put in place by the interim headteacher, to develop the school's perspective on its performance, are beginning to work well.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2007

- **Stabilise staffing and improve the quality of teaching, ensuring that assessment information is used effectively – sound progress in teaching and learning and the use of assessment but staffing is not yet stable.**
- **Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management of the headteacher, senior teachers and the governing body – satisfactory**

External support

The local authority (LA) continues to give good levels of support to the school since going into a special measures category. This is particularly in relation to the development of the Foundation Stage in order to raise the levels of overall provision for the children. An LA specialist in Early Years is successfully helping to develop the provision further, alongside Foundation Stage leader. The local authority principal officer for pupil achievement, who is also the school improvement officer, meets regularly with the current interim headteacher and continues to give a satisfactory external perspective. The interim executive chair of governors provides satisfactory support for the school. Currently the impact of external support is not yet enough to raise standards to the national expectation.

Priorities for further improvement

- Raise standards in English mathematics and science, particularly English and writing.
- Make sure that the quality of teaching and learning is good in most lessons and that planned differentiation for different groups is effective
- Develop the middle management roles more fully and increase levels of confidence in the procedures for assessment including differentiation, levelling and moderating pupils' work
- Improve attendance levels by increasing parental involvement.