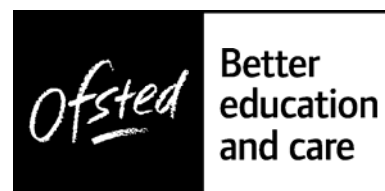


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18 July 2006

Mr. G Horne  
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Dear Geoff

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CLACKCLOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with 2 Additional Inspectors to your school on 28 and 29 June 2006, 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 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, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, the headteacher designate, core subject leaders, special needs coordinator, attendance officer, the chair of governors, a group of pupils and two representatives from the Local Authority (LA).

### **Context**

An acting headteacher continues to lead and manage the school until the new permanent headteacher takes up his post in September 2006. This term, the headteacher designate has been able to spend approximately one day a week in school working with the current senior leadership team and the governors. The

acting deputy headteacher's contract has been extended until December 2006 to provide support and continuity during the changeover next term. Three new appointments have been made for September 2006 including a nursery teacher and Key Stage 1 class teacher.

### **Achievement and standards**

This year's results in national tests show that almost three quarters of pupils in Year 6 achieved the expected requirement in English; results were slightly lower than those achieved in the previous year but exceeded the target the school set for itself. The majority of pupils performed better in the reading test than in the writing test. The proportion of pupils that achieved above national expectations was also above the school's predicted targets. National test results in other core subjects were not available at the time of the inspection visit. Results in optional national tests this year showed that the large majority of pupils in year 4 and 5 made some progress however, whilst most pupils achieved better than they have done recently, a small but significant proportion did not progress at a sufficient rate. The school's assessment data identifies who these pupils are but the strategies to support them are not as clearly defined as they could be. Pupils in Key Stage 2 told inspectors that at times, they find much of the work in lessons too easy.

Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 met the target set by the school in mathematics, but targets for reading or writing were not met, and overall standards remain below average. Test results were not as high as last year's but external moderation by the LA has shown that this year's results are accurate. Very few pupils achieved higher than national expectations, especially in reading and mathematics. This is a direct result of teaching in Year 1 and 2 classes that is generally satisfactory, but does not always stimulate and challenge pupils to achieve their very best. Most teachers have begun to plan different activities in lessons that match the abilities of all pupils but further scope exists to make work more challenging for pupils of higher ability. Investment in new equipment, coupled with staff training on how to use it has led to an increase in the number of lessons that feature opportunities for teachers and pupils to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

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

- Improve achievement, above all in English, maths, science and ICT – satisfactory progress

### **Personal development and well-being**

The positive pupils' attitudes and good behaviour observed during the previous inspection visit have been maintained. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They remain well behaved and cooperative in lessons even when at times, the work set is too easy for them. No unsatisfactory behaviour was seen during the inspection visit although pupils told inspectors that a few pupils still make unkind comments to each other. Some pupils are overly dependent on their teacher and tend to give up easily if they hit a problem and lose concentration when they are left to work by

themselves. The improvements in attitudes and behaviour are shown by the dramatic fall in the number of fixed term exclusions. Overall, attendance is broadly similar the national average. A major factor that led to an abnormally high absence rate in the spring term was an exceptionally high level of illness involving a large number of pupils in all classes.

Pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they have a particular concern. They say that the school responds well to their views and through the work of the school council, governors have recently provided 'benches for friends' in the playgrounds. Pupils are keen to resolve behavioural issues themselves and early indications are that these benches are very effective in helping children who feel lonely or left out. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities are cared for well and systems for keeping them safe are effective. Child protection procedures are good and vulnerable pupils receive high quality help and support, as and when the need arises. The quality of school meals has improved; there are more healthy options available and pupils comment favourably about the changes made.

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

- resolve the few remaining pupil behaviour difficulties which disrupt others' learning – good progress

### **Quality of provision**

Improvements to the quality of teaching and learning are overall, satisfactory. Since the last monitoring visit teachers have engaged in an on-going programme of joint lesson observations with senior managers to identify where best practice exists in the school. This is encouraging teachers to work together, share resources and embrace new ideas. It has started well but senior managers recognise that more work needs to be done to ensure good lessons become a consistent feature across all areas of the school. Inspectors concur with the school's own evaluation that the amount of good teaching is increasing, but there are pockets where an inconsistency in approach and lack of challenge results in satisfactory rather than good teaching, and occasionally to inadequate lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Focused lesson observations led by senior managers and local authority personnel would add greater rigour and challenge to the small minority of teachers who have been slow to respond to professional development.

Teaching is improving because most teachers are beginning to incorporate different activities into their planning that matches the range of pupil's abilities and ages in classes. In general, pupils are engaged and purposeful in their learning, and more pupils are finding lessons enjoyable. Progress made in improving teaching and learning is only satisfactory because consistently good teaching and learning has not yet been secured. Teachers generally are not making enough use of the good assessment data available in the school to plan the next steps in learning or target extra support at those pupils who are at risk of under-achieving. A small number of lessons still did not show sufficiently detailed planning and structure, and some lacked the pace or enthusiasm required to retain pupils' interest and avoid some becoming disinterested in learning.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs are generally met well by the special educational needs coordinator and a core of experienced teaching assistants. Not all lesson planning takes into account the targets set out for pupils in individual education plans and teaching assistants are not used well enough by class teachers to measure and record the progress of the individual pupils they work with. Timetables provide a balanced curriculum for all classes. The school plans to timetable daily reading time for all classes, commencing in September 2006.

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

- Improve teaching, learning above all in English, maths science and ICT – satisfactory progress
- Ensure that timetables provide a balanced curriculum for all classes utilising at least the recommended curriculum time – good progress

### **Leadership and management**

The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher continue to lead the school well and have ensured that the issues raised in the inspection in May 2005 are progressing satisfactorily or in some cases, have been resolved. The relationship between senior managers and staff is fully understood and policies are effectively implemented. Senior managers have been instrumental in developing a corporate responsibility for improving teaching and learning by encouraging teachers to monitor each others' work. They realise it now needs to be complimented with a targeted programme of formal observations to improve the effectiveness of a small number of staff who are not yet able to teach consistently well.

Subject leaders in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT have been trained by senior managers to monitor lessons and are now better equipped to lead their own lesson observations. Whilst satisfactory progress has been made in improving subject management, these procedures are very new and need developing further so subject leaders can identify the strengths and weaknesses of lessons and provide specialist support where needed. The acting deputy headteacher provides class teachers with an improved range of assessment data that plots individual pupil progress and analyses overall performance in tests. Not all class teachers make effective use of this information to raise pupil achievement and core subject leaders do not interpret it in sufficient depth to inform them of aspects of their subject that pupils and teachers need support with. The governing body, with the added support of the new headteacher designate continue to work with the local authority to seek a long-term solution to the problems caused by the split-site. Meetings with key personnel are taking place this term and the matter is progressing satisfactorily.

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

- Make subject management more effective, particularly in consistent use of assessment systems - satisfactory progress

- Clarify the relationship between senior managers and staff so that all policies are effectively and consistently implemented - good progress
- Work with the relevant authorities to minimise the impact of the split site and to plan for the long-term solution to the problem – satisfactory progress

### **External support**

The LA has provided satisfactory support for the school in its efforts to minimise the impact of the split site and to plan for the long term solution to the problem. LA support officers have assumed a lower profile in the school in order to allow the school to develop its own capacity to monitor pupil achievement and teaching and learning; this has led to some improvements but it is an appropriate time for the LA to intensify its support to ensure the new procedures the school has put in place become firmly established.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures– satisfactory progress

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory progress

One newly qualified teacher (NQT) has been appointed. Any further appointments of NQT's must be referred to HMI.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Make more use of focused lesson monitoring to improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Continue to develop the role of subject leaders and ensure they and class teachers use the assessment data available in school to raise pupil achievement
- Ensure teacher's lesson planning makes effective use of teaching assistants to assess and record the progress of pupils they work with.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Norfolk LA.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**H M Inspector**