

Cambridge Education
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct Tel 01223 578500

Direct Fax 01223 578501

Email – risp.inspections@ofsted.gov.uk



2 May 2007

Mr R Koon
Headteacher
Clackclose Community Primary School
Nursery Road
Downham Market
Norfolk
PE38 9PF

Dear Mr Koon

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Clackclose Community Primary School

Introduction

Following my visit with John Godwood and Ian Nelson, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 30 April and 1 May 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fifth 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 headteacher and deputy headteachers, core subject coordinators, all Year 6 pupils, the chair and vice-chair of governors and two representatives from the local authority (LA).

Context

A permanent deputy headteacher with experience in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 joined the school in February 2007. The LA has funded the existing deputy headteacher to remain in post until August 2007. The school is currently facing staffing reductions.

Achievement and standards

In the last monitoring inspection in September 2006, progress in raising achievement was judged to be inadequate. Standards in the 2006 national tests had declined in both key stages and the progress that pupils made from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 was exceptionally low overall, though broadly average in English. Since then, the school has made satisfactory progress in raising achievement but the overall progress made since being made subject to special measures remains inadequate. Pupils' progress is not sufficient to make up for their previous underachievement and assessment data shows that standards remain below average and on a par with the 2006 test results. The school's own assessment information shows that currently standards are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. In Year 6, standards are close to average in English, but well below average in mathematics and science.

The school now regularly assesses pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and has from this year begun to do so in science and information and communication technology (ICT). These records show that over the past year, pupils have made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Progress is good in some classes but is too variable across the year groups according to the expertise of each teacher. The school has improved its database of assessment records but it is not sufficiently robust. There are a few inaccuracies and too many gaps, particularly for children who have moved from other schools. It only includes recent data, particularly for science, and none at all for ICT, and hence cannot be used to track pupil progress over several years. As a result the targets that the school sets for individual children to achieve in national tests are not sufficiently well informed. Current targets are unrealistically challenging in Year 6 and too conservative in Year 2.

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 since the last monitoring visit but inadequate progress overall.

Personal development and well-being

Behaviour has improved since the last monitoring visit because pupils have been made fully aware of what is expected of them and they have responded by behaving well in class and around the school during breaks and lunchtimes. Teachers manage behaviour in lessons well and classrooms are now a much better environment in which to learn. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the range of rewards introduced by the headteacher to promote good behaviour and attendance. Pupils attend regularly and very few pupils have been excluded since the start of the year. They report that lunchtimes are better because there are games to compete in and they can borrow

equipment to play with. They feel safe and do not consider bullying an issue in the school. Friendship benches in the playground have made a difference and many pupils report that they have used them to help other pupils. The school council has instigated improvements to the school toilets and the quality of healthy lunches.

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

The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now at least satisfactory and at times good, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school, in conjunction with the LA, has introduced regular, focused lesson observations to identify each teacher's strengths and weaknesses and offer support to help them improve. Teachers have benefited from regular visits to a local school to see examples of good practice which they might adopt. Whilst improvements are noticeable they are not consistent across all classes and subjects and have not fully overcome the legacy of underdeveloped basic skills in literacy and numeracy, particularly spelling and knowledge of multiplication tables. Nevertheless, improved teaching is more noticeable in English and mathematics than in science.

Most teachers now plan challenging activities for higher achieving pupils and make effective use of teaching assistants to support lower achievers. However, their expectations of what all pupils are capable of are not as high as they should be and some more able pupils could achieve more than they currently do. Learning outcomes are shared with pupils but only a few teachers explore their full meaning or revisit them during lessons to keep pupils focused on exactly what they are expected to learn.

Interactive whiteboards have been installed in all classrooms and teachers use them with greater confidence and competence to capture pupils' interest and make learning enjoyable. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment records to monitor the progress of individual children and provide additional support for those who are underachieving. The improvement targets set for individual pupils are good in some classes but this quality is not consistent across all subjects and all classes.

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

- improve teaching and learning, above all in English, maths, science and ICT – satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

The new headteacher has made a significant impact on the school since taking up his post in September 2006. Year 6 pupils commented that 'our new headteacher has made a real difference' and listed many improvements made to the school this year. He has grasped the key issues facing the school and worked closely with the governors and the local authority to address them. He has acted decisively over difficult staffing issues and re-allocated subject management responsibilities within a restructured senior leadership team. In a short space of time the headteacher has led effectively and is beginning to make long-lasting improvements, but it is too early to see the full impact of these changes on higher standards achieved throughout the school.

Subject leaders now have clear accountabilities and have received training and support to equip them for their enhanced roles. However, these roles are quite new and it is too early at this stage to evaluate their full impact on raising standards and improving achievement. Coordinators of English and mathematics have benefited from intensive support from the LA, particularly in collecting and analysing assessment data to find out how well pupils are doing and identify those who need extra help. These systems are in the early stages of development and do not yet extend into science and ICT.

Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have designed their own development plan to improve their effectiveness. They display a clear understanding of the information the school has on how well pupils have done in national tests and are rigorous in holding the school to account for its performance. Governors and the headteacher continue to work with the LA to resolve the problems caused by the split-site and initial proposals for development are now in place.

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

Since the previous visit the LA has increased its support for the school and provided a good blend of challenge and support for teachers and leaders which has contributed directly to the recent improvements made, particularly in the teaching of literacy and numeracy and developing the role of subject leaders. It has been instrumental in facilitating links with a neighbouring school and has allocated significant resources to aid the induction of the newly appointed deputy headteacher.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Further appointments of newly qualified teachers must be referred to HMI.

Priorities for further improvement

- Build a complete and accurate database of assessment records in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Set individual pupil targets that are challenging, meaningful and based realistically on their current achievement.
- Continue to improve teachers' expertise to enable pupils to make good progress in all subjects across all year groups.
- Embed the new leadership and management roles and monitor their impact and effectiveness.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson.
H M Inspector