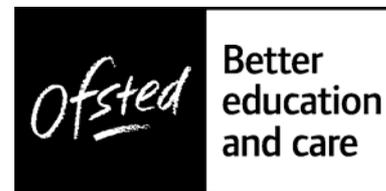


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28 July 2005

Miss E Dixon  
Headteacher  
Cogenhoe Primary School  
York Avenue  
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Northampton  
NN7 1NB

Dear Miss Dixon

### **Implementation of Cogenhoe Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Mr P Brooker HMI to your school on 18 July 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the quality of the action plan; the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school's action plan is satisfactory overall with some weaknesses. The weaknesses outlined in the second paragraph of the note of the inspection findings should be addressed and amendments prepared by the second monitoring inspection.

The LEA's statement of action is satisfactory.

The school has made reasonable progress since being subject to special measures.

The LEA's target date of autumn term 2006 for the removal of special measures is realistic.

The school is permitted to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Corporate Director – Education Services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF COGENHOE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit meetings were held with the headteacher, nominated staff, the chair of governors and a representative from the LEA. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the LEA.

Following the school's inspection in November 2004, the action plan was drawn up in consultation with school staff, governors and LEA representatives. The plan addresses each of the areas for improvement with an appropriate range of actions. It sets target dates for completing tasks; nominates the person responsible for each undertaking; identifies resources needed; and outlines success indicators. In general, the plan is concise and well stated, but some details lack clarity. For example, some success criteria are too general, and procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress need to be more precisely delineated so that those responsible are clear about their roles. The LEA's statement of action mirrors the priorities in the governors' action plan and indicates a suitable commitment to supporting the school.

Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes: all the teachers in Key Stage 2 have resigned; two left in December and two will leave at the end of the summer term. The school has filled these vacancies for September, including one appointment to the senior management team. In addition, there are a number of planned changes: interactive white boards will be installed in each class; the library will be moved to the heart of the school; and an outdoor play facility for the Foundation Stage pupils will be constructed.

Taken over time, standards of attainment in the end-of-Key Stage 1 national tests have been broadly in line with the median for all schools; standards in the end-of-Key Stage 2 tests have been well above average. However, the school's trend has been below the national one, and there has been significant underachievement, notably amongst the higher attaining pupils and in science. To a large extent, the most recent test results confirm this pattern; the unvalidated results were broadly in line with the school's targets, but there has been no significant overall improvement in standards at either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. Many pupils made satisfactory progress, but achievement is unsatisfactory for too many pupils.

The school's monitoring and analysis of non-statutory tests indicate an uneven pattern of progress for Key Stage 2 pupils this year. The quality of learning is too variable between classes and between different subjects.

The pupils were well behaved around the school, during break periods and in the lunch hall. Pupils of all ages interacted well and were polite and helpful towards visitors. There has been one fixed-term exclusion this term.

The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. She has a clear vision for its improvement and has effectively communicated her high expectations to staff, pupils and parents. The headteacher's honest and rigorous evaluation provides a secure basis for prioritising actions, targeting support and planning training. Her supportive but uncompromising approach has led to significant improvement in the school's provision and in the leadership skills of other key staff. She has addressed weaknesses with suitable determination and has maintained good staff morale at a difficult time. Improvements have been suitably underpinned by the development of new policies; the pupils have been consulted over some of these. Parents are kept well informed about developments. The school is well placed to consolidate and extend its recent improvement.

The governing body has undergone a number of changes since the inspection; recent appointments have significantly strengthened governance. The headteacher provides clear and detailed information for governors. In addition, the recently appointed chair of governors has quickly introduced a range of procedures and systems to ensure that governors are kept up-to-date about the school. The governing body understands its responsibilities and is sufficiently well informed to be able to hold the school to account.

The quality of the LEA's support for the school has been good. Teachers spoke positively about the quality of curriculum advice, the usefulness of model lessons and the impact of this support on the school's provision.

## **Action taken to address the areas for improvement**

### **Priority Area 1: raise standards in all subjects and immediately tackle pupils' underachievement**

The school is aware that, although standards are broadly in line with or above those seen nationally, a significant proportion of pupils continue to underachieve because of a legacy of weak teaching.

Suitable steps have been taken to raise standards by strengthening the curriculum, the quality of teaching and assessment.

Analysis of non-statutory tests has confirmed specific areas of weakness, but also highlighted areas where there has been recent improvement as a result of intensive support. The school is aware of the broad strengths and weaknesses in standards, but has not analysed rigorously the impact of intervention strategies to support those pupils who have received additional support.

Progress in raising standards is limited.

**Priority Area 2: improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout Years 2 to 6; improving curriculum planning and ensuring that teachers are aware of expectations and what knowledge, skills and understanding pupils should acquire in mixed age classes**

The school's expectations have been clarified in the revised teaching and learning policy. A good programme of continuing professional development has been developed, including model lessons, visits to beacon schools to observe good practice and specific training on key aspects of teaching. A systematic programme of lesson observations has been established to evaluate the impact of this training. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified, and suitable support provided for weaker teaching. The school's monitoring indicates that the overall quality of teaching has strengthened considerably, with all staff making progress in improving their teaching, notably in mathematics.

Medium and long-term planning have been reviewed, and include opportunities for assessment. The quality of short-term planning has improved: lessons are guided by specific learning intentions and present the pupils with a better range and variety of learning activities. Improving teachers' subject knowledge has been identified as a key area for development.

Progress in Year 2 is good and it is reasonable overall.

**Priority Area 3: implement rigorous assessment procedures and use data effectively to plan the next steps of pupils' learning**

The school has taken a number of positive steps to improve the quality of pupil data and strengthen the use of assessment: an assessment policy has been written; systematic procedures have been established for tracking the pupils' progress, based on regular assessment and analysis of results in national and non-statutory tests; procedures for target-setting have been revised; and staff training has focused suitably on the use of assessment for learning. Observations of lessons show good progress in the development of routines for assessing the pupils' learning. However, there remain inconsistencies in marking.

Progress is good.

**Priority Area 4: develop the leadership and management of subject leaders and key staff to ensure that teaching and curriculum are led and managed effectively**

Leadership roles and responsibilities have been suitably clarified. There has been significant improvement in the leadership and management of mathematics and literacy. These subject co-ordinators understand their responsibilities and have been empowered to take responsibility for monitoring their subject areas and to use their evaluation to guide curriculum development.

The deputy headteacher's whole-school responsibilities have developed well.

Progress is good.

**Priority Area 5: implement consistent strategies for behaviour management and improve provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The revision of the behaviour policy has established common expectations in order to achieve a more consistent approach to the management of behaviour in lessons. The school's monitoring indicates that most teachers effectively apply the agreed procedures. Teaching assistants use behaviour logs to monitor the pupils' behaviour, but this information has not been analysed in detail. Although the school reports significant improvement in the climate for learning, with pupils more effectively engaged in learning, progress in this area has not been rigorously evaluated.

Progress is reasonable.