

Serco Inspections  
Cedar House  
21 William Street  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 1LH

**Ofsted**  
T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Serco**  
**Direct T** 0121 683 3888



14 July 2011

Mr Mellor  
Houldsworth Valley Primary School  
Rowley Drive  
Newmarket  
CB8 0PU

Dear Mr Mellor

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Houldsworth Valley Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 12 July 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2011. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

David Jones  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

**The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2011.**

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

■ **Improve leadership and management by:**

- improving the effectiveness of the leadership team to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning systematically across the school
- developing a programme of regular monitoring activities for all school leaders, to include time to evaluate evidence and feed the information back to teachers
- increasing the governing body's role in monitoring the school's performance in order to challenge school leaders more precisely and secure rapid improvement
- ensuring that the governing body maintains an up-to-date central record of risk assessments.

■ **Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and increase pupils' rates of progress by:**

- increasing teachers' knowledge and understanding of attainment levels in English and mathematics, as exemplified in the National Curriculum descriptors, to raise expectations and to know what to plan for the pupils
- implementing a consistent approach to planning that identifies learning objectives and what pupils will know by the end of a lesson, linked to the National Curriculum levels appropriate to their ages
- increasing the accuracy of assessments of what pupils are learning so that they know what they need to learn next and tasks are planned accordingly
- setting learning targets that are realistic and challenging for all groups of pupils
- establishing a whole-school spelling and handwriting policy and using this to improve pupils' writing and presentation skills.

■ **Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:**

- planning adult-led sessions that engage children for a suitable length of time for their ages and levels of development, in communication, language and literacy and problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy

- ensuring that opportunities are planned for children to independently explore and consolidate their learning but with adult support when appropriate.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Houldsworth Valley Primary School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 12 July 2011**

#### **Evidence**

HMI observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with four members of the governing body, the headteacher, the headteacher designate, groups of parents, and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

The headteacher retires after 14 years of service at the end of the summer term 2011. An acting headteacher takes charge of the school at the start of the new academic year. The Chair of the Governing Body has resigned and the vice-chair is currently leading the governing body. In September 2011, the current Year 4 pupils will move into a new Year 5 class on-site as part of the local authority's reorganisation of school places; these pupils will be the first year group to take the Year 6 national tests at the school in the summer of 2013.

#### **Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

The results of the 2011 Year 2 teacher assessments were disappointing and the pupils' overall point score is likely to remain significantly below the national average. Similarly, the Early Years Foundation Stage profile indicates that, although children develop appropriate social skills, their communication, language and literacy skills remain well below expectations. In his last report to the governing body, the headteacher noted that the performance of Year 4 pupils remained below age related expectations. As yet, the school's assessment data base is insufficiently robust to provide accurate evaluations of pupil progress.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and increase pupils' rates of progress – inadequate.

#### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Overall, the pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes very good. There are occasions where, as a result of weak teaching, they become disengaged and disgruntled.

When they are unhappy, for example, because of a misunderstanding with their peers they seek the support of a member of staff with evident confidence. Attendance is below the average for primary schools.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

Nine lessons were observed, four of them as joint observations with senior staff. Two thirds of the lessons were judged satisfactory or better because pupils made appropriate progress. In an effective Year 3/4 literacy lesson, the pupils worked well in pairs to produce a play script that utilized the characters in a children's story. Most pupils produced useful stage directions for the characters and some wrote additional narrative. In this lesson, the teaching assistant and the class teacher were an effective team.

Where lessons were judged to be satisfactory, not all the planned work was managed effectively and the pace of learning was inconsistent. Some whole class teaching was well managed but not all tasks matched the pupils' individual learning needs or were sufficiently focussed on the quality of learning.

Where teaching was judged to be inadequate, the pace of learning and the challenge provided was inappropriate. In these sessions, staff failed to provide consistent direction on how to complete a task. For example, mathematics lessons did not always provide guidance on how to set out number line problems and so the pupils' calculations were often inaccurate. A scrutiny of the pupils' books reveals that marking is inconsistent; while there are examples of good marking, some books have not been marked for the most of the school year.

Some good one-to-one support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, a scrutiny of some of the pupils' case files reveals a lack of: summary paperwork that would inform teaching assistants and class teachers; an absence of current assessment data pertinent to need and provision and a clear overview of pupil progress.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision moves into new accommodation in September. In the morning sessions, the pace of learning was slow and at times, the children were not sufficiently engaged. Small-scale activities were not always ready to start after whole class sessions and the continuity of learning limited. Although some effective one-to-one and small group sessions were evident, provision lacked clear themes that would be the focus of the morning or afternoon session. The use of assessment to inform learning was limited. These inconsistencies in the quality of learning are reflected in the low outcomes of the 2011 Early Years Foundation Stage profile.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage – inadequate

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Senior staff have an accurate view of teaching and learning. However, although they have monitored teaching since the previous inspection, there is no evidence of the impact of this work or an improvement in this key provision.

The school improvement plan is logical and some evidence was presented of initial developments, however, there is no evidence of impact on the standards attained or the progress made by pupils.

The governing body is developing a clear understanding of what needs to be done. However, information provided to governors on standards and provision still lacks clarity, evidence of impact, appropriate stepping stones to success, and national benchmarks.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- Improve leadership and management – inadequate

### **External support**

The local authority is providing satisfactory support and its statement of action is fit for purpose. Recently introduced arrangements with a local leader of education and her effective school are a positive development. An acting headteacher has been appointed for the start of the next academic year and sensible arrangements made for her to work alongside the current headteacher for the final few weeks of the current summer term.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Develop a robust assessment evidence base to facilitate the monitoring of pupil progress in all year groups.
- Establish a rigorous system of accurate identification, appropriate provision, robust assessment, and consistent monitoring for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.