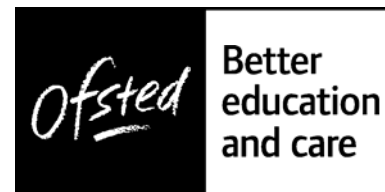


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11 August 2005

Mrs S Rimmer  
Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Rimmer

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

Following the visit of Mr C Humphreys HMI on July 4 and 5, 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.

The LEA's statement of action is good.

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

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

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Chief Education Officer for Derbyshire This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## IMPLEMENTATION OF SUDBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN

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

During the visit several parts of lessons and two assemblies were inspected. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, two pupils from Year 6, the chair of governors and two representatives of the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the acting headteacher, the chair of the governing body, and two representatives from the LEA.

The LEA identified the school as a cause for concern a few years ago and had already worked extensively to secure improvements. Due to significant staffing changes, progress was slow. Recently, the acting headteacher was appointed for a further two years. One part-time teacher has resigned and is leaving at the end of this term. Her replacement has not yet been appointed. Another teacher, whose performance is causing concern, has been on sick leave for a few weeks, and her class is being taken by a supply teacher. Considering this is a very small school with just two classes these staffing issues have a negative impact on the smooth implementation of the action plan.

Following the section 10 inspection in January 2005, the school, governors and LEA worked carefully together to produce the school's action plan. The school's action plan is satisfactory overall, although it has one main weakness: the order and wording of the areas for improvement are not the same as in the section 10 inspection report, which is unhelpful. The focus is too much on improving teaching rather than teaching and learning together. The school must work with teachers to ensure that any evaluations of teaching should be based on the degree to which pupils make gains in their knowledge and understanding, or develop their skills.

The plan has a clear format and the actions are appropriate for making the necessary improvements, with the exception of the comment relating to learning made above. The plan contains useful numerical targets where appropriate, and identifies strategies for monitoring progress. The governors are suitably involved in the evaluation of the school's work through the governing body's action plan committee. The plan helpfully contains smaller action plans for writing, mathematics, and science. Throughout the plan the involvement of the LEA is clearly shown. The plan has been costed.

The LEA's commentary and statement of action are good. The statement of action dovetails well with the school's action plan, provides a substantial programme of support and is carefully costed. The LEA is providing considerable extra funding to the school, partly to allow the acting headteacher to be released from any class-teaching responsibility. The LEA has formed a special measures support

group which will meet half-termly to review the school's progress, and an LEA support team will also meet to review the impact of the LEA's own work.

The 2005 results in the end-of-key stage tests have been positive. All six Year 2 pupils gained Level 2 across the different tests, and these were mostly at Level 2B and 2A. All three Year 6 pupils gained at least the expected Level 4 across the different subjects, with one pupil gaining Level 5s. However, the picture is less positive elsewhere: in the optional tests for other year groups some pupils did not reach the levels they should, given their prior attainment, and the work in their books revealed some significant underachievement, particularly in Years 4 and 5. At times the higher-attaining pupils underachieved because the work they were given lacked challenge.

Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils made good progress in a lesson about the emergency services because the teacher's skilful use of open questions produced some good oral responses and promoted the pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively. Key Stage 2 pupils made satisfactory progress in a history lesson taught by the headteacher because they were engaged by the practical activity of their mini archaeological dig. In a Key Stage 2 physical education lesson the pupils' progress was poor because the teacher failed to manage the pupils' misbehaviour. The reception pupils' progress was impeded by the unsuitable range of teaching and learning styles used, which for much of the time was too formal to best meet their needs. The activities did not sufficiently allow them to explore resources freely and to talk about their experiences: too much of the time was controlled by the teaching assistant who was working with them, and it was clear that the class teacher had not briefed the teaching assistant appropriately.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory in reception and Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. The reception pupils were well behaved, although they struggled to concentrate fully when carpet sessions lasted too long or when the teaching was too formal. The Key Stage 1 pupils were mostly attentive and interested in their work, even when the teaching required them to be rather passive learners. In Key Stage 2 the pupils' behaviour was never properly settled and at worse was silly and disruptive. Some misbehaviour included pupils, mostly but not exclusively the boys, quietly goading or kicking each other, creating an unpleasant atmosphere. There was much tale-telling that interrupted the flow of the lesson. In a physical education lesson the pupils were very disruptive and as a consequence little teaching and learning took place. At playtime on the first day of the monitoring inspection the older boys did not share the netball resources well, which were monopolised by a small group. This was not picked up by the supervising staff. At lunchtime the atmosphere in the dining room was not always conducive to the kind of ethos that the school should be promoting and the midday supervisors were not always effective in ensuring that pupils had good attitudes and routines.

The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory overall, although there were some examples of effective teaching. The best lesson was taken by the part-time

teacher on the second day of the inspection. In this lesson the teacher used a range of approaches that captivated the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Most pupils, for example, operated the interactive white board, and recognised a word on their own special flashcard which they put on a chart correctly. These simple practical activities were effective in involving the pupils in their learning. The pupils were particularly engaged when the teacher and teaching assistant went into role as a distressed victim of theft and a phone operator; a simple strategy that worked well. The other lesson that was effectively taught was that taken by the headteacher, where the pupils were allowed to take responsibility for the activity, working well in pairs or small groups. It was also successful because the headteacher skilfully intervened when necessary to refocus the pupils work and to review the learning. The worksheets were well matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils. In the other lessons the teachers dominated or controlled the flow of the lesson too much, which meant that the pupils were too passive as learners. In the Key Stage 1 class, for example, the teacher used the interactive white board to create shapes for the pupils to recognise, but the opportunity to allow the pupils to operate the board and create the shapes for themselves was missed. Similarly, in a lesson on control technology, the teacher ended up programming the moving robot herself with the pupils watching her do this, rather than letting the pupils continue do it themselves. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson the pupils spent far too much time on the carpet and they lost concentration. The pace of the lesson was rather pedestrian. The work set from text books was dull, and it was not clear to the pupils whether or not they should show their workings. In most lessons, too little attention was given to whether or not the pupils were learning; too much emphasis was on keeping them occupied.

A positive feature of the school is the lively and colourful displays that support learning or celebrate the pupils' achievements.

The work of the teaching assistants was unsatisfactory, and the teachers do not deploy them effectively. In the Key Stage 2 class the teaching assistant flitted from pupil to pupil, or from group to group, and although her interventions were helpful at a superficial level, there was no strategy in the way in which the teacher used her. In the Key Stage 1 class, as mentioned previously, the teacher did not give sufficient guidance to the teaching assistant, who used inappropriate learning styles with the reception pupils. However, there were examples where the teaching assistants worked effectively; for example, during the teacher's introduction in the Key Stage 2 class, the teaching assistant whispered supportively to a pupil who has learning difficulties and this helped to keep this particular pupil focused.

Another weakness in the reception provision is the lack of appropriate resources in the classroom, such as a themed play corner. No use was made of the outdoor area during this inspection.

The leadership of the acting headteacher is good. She understands where the weaknesses are and which strategies will move the school forward. She has appropriately high expectations of the staff and supports their development well.

She has put in place a coherent and helpful programme of staff training, but issues with staffing have meant that some areas for development are moving too slowly. She has worked systematically to build up structures for managing the school's work, for example, the curriculum, assessment systems and lesson planning, but many are not fully embedded across the school, and the impact of staff training has been limited.

The personal development of the pupils has some positive features but there are weaknesses, relating to behaviour and attitudes in Key Stage 2. The two assemblies struck the right tone in terms of raising pupils' social and moral awareness. The pupils benefit from a range of special activities such as a residential experience at White Hall, and this contributes well to their personal development. However, there is more work to do in developing a whole-school ethos of high aspirations and care for each other.

The governors are clearer than they were before about the school's weaknesses and what is needed to move things forward. The chair is aware of the commitment that governors must now make to help the school out of special measures. The headteacher is giving the governors honest and good quality information and the governors are beginning to ask appropriate questions about the school's progress.

The LEA has provided plenty of good quality support to the school, in order to help staff realise the size of the task ahead. However, the impact of this support has been diluted by staffing issues mentioned earlier.

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

### **1: raise standards and the rate of achievement for all pupils**

An effective start has been made in establishing systems for assessing and recording the pupils' achievement. The use of data is much improved and the school is better placed to track the pupils' progress as they move through the school and to identify the next steps for helping them move forward. However, although the headteacher has a clear understanding of these assessment issues, other staff are still developing their skills in using data to inform their teaching. Assessment for learning is still not well developed in the classrooms. Little impact has been made in raising standards and the rate of all pupils' achievement, so progress in this area for development is limited.

### **2: ensure all aspects of teaching and learning are of a high quality**

The school has effective systems for monitoring teaching and learning and is identifying where improvements need to be made in planning, and in teaching methodology. This work is important in establishing clear expectations. However, given the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, limited progress has been made in this area for development.

**3: extend the roles and responsibilities of coordinators so that they check that the pupils are reaching the standards of which they are capable and to meet statutory requirements**

The school is teaching the required curriculum but work on developing the roles of co-ordinators has not yet started. Limited progress has been made.

**4: ensure the pupils receive a broad and interesting curriculum in all subjects that provides continuity and enables them to progress rapidly**

Teachers are covering all the subjects of the National Curriculum, although the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is not embedded. Some positive progress has been made in the use of interactive white boards in making lessons more interesting, but this is in the early stages of development. The acting headteacher has made a good contribution to the development of art. There is more investigative practical work in science than before. With the focus rightly being on literacy and numeracy, the development of appropriate schemes of work in other subjects, that take account of the mixed-age classes, is not yet underway. However, the headteacher has worked with the appropriate staff to begin planning a coherent four-year curriculum framework for Key Stage 2.

The school has made reasonable progress on this area for development.