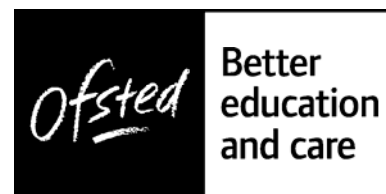


School Improvement Division
4th Floor
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Direct Tel 020 7421 6594
Direct Fax 020 7421 6855

www.ofsted.gov.uk



28 April 2005

Mrs L Lydiate
Locum Headteacher
Middlezoy Primary School
Church Road
Middlezoy
Bridgewater
Somerset
TA7 0NZ

Dear Mrs Lydiate

Implementation of Middlezoy Primary School's Action Plan

Following the visit of Mrs P Robins HMI to your school on 18 and 19 April 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: 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 has made good progress since the last monitoring inspection and good progress overall since being subject to special measures.

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 of Education for Somerset. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid
Head of School Improvement

IMPLEMENTATION OF MIDDLEZOY PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN

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

During the visit seven lessons or parts of lessons, two registration sessions and one assembly were inspected. Meetings were held with the locum headteacher, the chair of governors and the senior teacher. 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 locum headteacher, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the LEA.

The governors, having advertised the substantive headteacher post, failed to attract a suitable field. The post is currently being re-advertised with an updated and, the governors believe, more attractive pack of information for prospective candidates. Should this again fail to generate suitable applications, the governors will work with the LEA to consider an alternative solution.

The school continues to attract new pupils, despite being in special measures, and support from within the village community is strong. Parental questionnaires show a change to the way in which the school is perceived and are very positive. There was one hundred per cent attendance at the recent consultation evening. Parents discussed the progress of their children and were also inducted into the use of pupil tracking and target-setting procedures. The weekly newsletter keeps parents up to date with events and developments and they are also part of the consultation process when new policies are evolving.

The school has set quite challenging targets for the end-of-key stage tests. These will be particularly difficult to achieve in Year 6 where each pupil's results equate to 14 per cent; even a small mobility factor can be critical to the overall result. The predicted results for Key Stage 1 are more secure, where the pupils have experienced consistently good teaching and high expectations over a longer period of time.

Assessment procedures in the core subjects are good. Assessment is used to inform future planning, make judgements on the pupils' progress, and assess the impact and effectiveness of intervention strategies. Teachers are being held to account for the pupils' results. The majority of pupils are making appropriate progress in relation to their ability. Teachers are able to identify accurately those pupils who fail to progress and provide timely support or employ alternative teaching strategies. The data analysis of the pupils' attainment and achievement in relation to their date of birth has now been completed. This has confirmed the school's suspicions that there is a strong correlation which can be tracked through all year groups. In response, teachers are giving further consideration to modifying curriculum content and the style by which they teach. Assessment in the foundation subjects is in place. However, the school recognises that there is still

work to be done in this area, particularly around assessment for learning and moderation.

Standards throughout the school continue to improve. The pupils' oral skills are particularly good. In lessons, the teachers demand that the pupils answer in full and extended sentences, enunciate clearly and speak so that everyone can hear. The teachers are consistent in their expectations, and as a result the presentation of pupils' work is of good quality throughout the school. The majority of pupils form their letters well and their handwriting is legible, even in Year 1. The drive to use mental, oral calculations at the beginning of each numeracy lesson has been justified. The pupils' ability to select, use and explain differing problem-solving methods is now in evidence.

The quality of the teaching and learning was good in six lessons and satisfactory in one. Good teaching was characterised by changing the pace and tasks within each lesson; recognising the differing needs of individual pupils and the use of questions to challenge pupils' thinking and probe their understanding. Learning objectives were stated at the beginning of each session and the pupils were clear about what they needed to learn by the end of the lesson. Expectations were high, classroom routines were well established and support staff were integral to the teaching and assessment process. Even in the satisfactory lesson, elements of these characteristics were seen but their delivery lacked confidence.

The pupils' behaviour around the school continues to be very good; the pupils are courteous, polite and keen to engage in conversation with visitors. In lessons, attitudes and behaviour were very good in one lesson, good in four lessons and satisfactory in two. Increasingly, the pupils work independently. During a numeracy lesson, the Year 1 children played a counting game without close adult supervision. They threw the dice, used counters to register their score and took turns sensibly. The pupils want to do well and have enthusiasm for their lessons. For the most part they listened attentively and had good levels of concentration for their age. The teachers were able to recognise when the pupils' powers of concentration were being challenged and quickly switched to another task or used brain gym techniques to refocus the learning. The pupils were considerate and supportive of each other. Any minor incidents or disagreements were dealt with quickly and quietly by the staff so they did not disrupt learning.

Assemblies reflect the ethos of the school as a community, and meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. Throughout, the headteacher made good use of music, interaction with the pupils and issues relevant to the age and experience of the children. Pupils were chosen to read the daily prayer, which provided a period of quiet reflection. They sang with enthusiasm and obviously enjoyed this time of the day which makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

The quality and range of the outdoor play environment has been greatly improved by the completion of the Trim Trail. However, the provision of a secure outdoor

play area for the Foundation Stage pupils requires further work. Improvements to the infrastructure of the building still need to be made but it is hoped these will be carried out during the summer term.

There continues to be a strong commitment from the governing body to support the school in its improvement agenda. There is a recognition that staff and governors are very much one team and work together to write policies, monitor progress and pursue developments. The governors have undertaken extensive, focused training, which has concentrated on monitoring and evaluation. The LEA has worked alongside the governors to develop a scaffold of questions which can be used in every monitoring situation. Governors who have been involved in monitoring, report back at the beginning of each full governing body meeting, having completed a monitoring card using the questions as a prompt. This is a simple yet effective process.

The LEA continues to offer a high level of support. The Link School Development Adviser (LSDA) visits the school at least every two weeks. She has effectively co-ordinated the programme of support, but acknowledges that as the school has become more secure it is now recognising, and is driving, its own training and development needs. Support from the traveller service has also been good, not just in relation to traveller children but in developing a wider whole-school induction policy for new pupils. Governors report that the LEA governor support service has provided excellent support and training.

Action taken to address the areas for improvement

1: raise standards and improve pupils' achievements

Standards in all aspects of the school's work are improving. However, there remains a legacy of low expectation which is hard to overcome for the oldest pupils.

Progress is reasonable.

2: improve the quality of teaching and learning

Overall the support provided by the learning support assistants is good. They now recognise that their role is integral to raising standards and moving forward the improvement agenda within the school. For some it is now about making the transition from classroom assistant to teaching assistant and further training.

Progress is good.

3: ensure the curriculum meets pupils' needs

Half a morning each week, throughout the year, is currently given to swimming. The school needs to consider whether this is appropriate, or necessary, given the pressure this puts on staff to deliver the remainder of the curriculum.

A wide range of extracurricular activities is offered, including sporting activities, music and French. The special curriculum days, visits and residential trips add to the pupils' experience and enrich classroom practice.

Progress is reasonable.

4: strengthen the systems and procedures that guarantee the care and welfare of pupils

Health and safety issues have been addressed. Keys are now kept in secure, accessible places. Staff know where safety and first aid equipment is stored and regular checks are carried out.

Medicines and other safety policies are adhered to and regular fire drills now take place.

Progress is good.

5: ensure the leadership and management drive forward the improvements needed

Systems are secure. There is a diaried schedule of weekly staff meetings and minuted senior management meetings. New policies are clear, concise and pragmatic; these are being used and are understood but have yet to become embedded.

The role of the subject leader is developing rapidly. Action plans have been written and budget bids have been submitted and agreed. The monitoring of planning and a timetable of lesson observations in the core subjects is operating smoothly. Appropriate staff development opportunities are being sought which will enable staff to enhance their expertise and experience.

Progress is good.