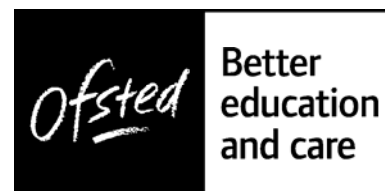


Cambridge Education
Demeter House
Station road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

T 01223 578500
F 01223 578501
Inspections_1@camb-ed.com

Ofsted helpline
0845 640 4045



Mrs S Rimmer,
Acting Headteacher
Sudbury Primary School
School Lane
Sudbury
Ashbourne
Derbyshire
DE6 5HZ

25 November 2005

Dear Mrs Rimmer

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SUDBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Andrew Cook HMI to your school on 3 and 4 November, 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in January 2005.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, two class teachers, and the chair of governors. Informal discussions were held with pupils and other staff.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection one part-time teacher has left the school and the other part-time teacher has become full time. Another teacher, who was on sick leave at the time of the previous inspection, is now back in school.

Achievement and standards

The results of the recent half-termly assessments show that the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not making the progress that they should, which is a cause for concern.

In lessons the work is not pitched high enough for these older pupils and the teachers' expectations are too low. A scrutiny of the work in their books confirms they are underachieving. It is poorly presented and there is little evidence to show that they take pride in what they do. The work given to the higher-attaining pupils does not provide sufficient challenge for them. The pupils in Year 4, who are in the same class as those in Years 5 and 6, have made good progress recently, mainly because the teaching is generally pitched at their level. This does not, however, compensate for the unsatisfactory progress made by the older pupils in this class. The recent assessments show that pupils in Year 3 have mostly made satisfactory progress. Pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2 do not always make consistently satisfactory progress because of the lack of clear and purposeful interventions by staff and helpers, which fail to maintain the focus on the planned learning objectives.

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

- raise standards and the rate of achievement for all pupils – inadequate progress.

Personal development and well-being

The pupils have a more positive attitude to their learning than at the time of the previous monitoring inspection. Much of this improvement is due to the efforts of the acting headteacher, who has successfully worked with the pupils to improve their behaviour. The pupils are considerate to each other, well behaved and get on with their work quietly. The pupils' behaviour at lunchtime, for example, is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. The pupils are generally happy at school and want to learn. The younger pupils enjoy their lessons, but this is not so strongly the case in Key Stage 2, where the pupils' enthusiasm is sometimes dampened by the unexciting teaching. The pupils' level of attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Overall, the quality of teaching is inadequate because it is not sufficiently challenging all pupils, and many do not make good enough progress. In the Reception and Key Stage 1 class there has been an improvement in the quality of the educational provision. The teacher has a reflective approach to her teaching and is keen to improve her practice further. In this class, lesson planning is appropriate and differentiates learning thoughtfully. A range of activities is used to engage the pupils in their learning, although some of the activities are not always well managed by the teaching assistant, and some children do not achieve the lesson's objectives. Given the wide age range in each of the two classes, it is especially important that the teaching assistants are given clear instructions about how they should maintain a

sharp focus on the pupils' learning. The displays in the Reception and infant class celebrate the children's achievement well and the 'haunted castle' corner provided an exciting area for motivating speaking and listening.

In the Key Stage 2 class, the pupils are too passive in their learning because the teacher does not manage time effectively and does not provide enough appropriate challenge. The main weaknesses are that the teacher keeps the pupils for far too long on the carpet, and questions are not effectively differentiated. This causes pupils to lose concentration and interest. There is also too little opportunity or encouragement given for children to give extended answers, so it is not possible to gauge their understanding. Too much of whole-class teaching is not challenging for the higher achievers and so they become unenthusiastic and sluggish. The teaching assistant contributes too little to the lesson during the carpet session. Although children sensibly get on with their work the pace of learning is pedestrian because neither the teacher nor teaching assistant motivate the children so that they enjoy their work. The teaching assistant focuses too much on checking the pupils' work and too little on developing their understanding.

The displays in the Key Stage 2 classroom are poor.

The school is rightly developing the way it manages the curriculum and it now has a helpful curriculum map that outlines the main themes for each term. The school sensibly follows the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and has outlined schemes of work for some other subjects, although this work is in the early stages of development. In most of the medium-term planning there is not sufficient detail to differentiate the expectations for the range of abilities in each class.

Half-termly assessments are helping the school to establish a coherent system for tracking the pupils' progress. Use of external markers is ensuring consistency in the assessments, while the teachers strengthen their confidence in making accurate assessments themselves. However, this work is not yet securely embedded and there is more to do.

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

- ensure all aspects of teaching and learning are of a high quality - inadequate progress
- ensure the pupils receive a broad and interesting curriculum in all subjects that provides continuity and enables them to progress rapidly – satisfactory progress, but there is still much more work to do.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher continues to demonstrate a clear understanding of what needs to be done, and has put in place improved systems for organising the pupils' learning. Her evaluation of the school's progress is accurate. She has successfully strengthened the school's ethos and effectively encourages pupils to think carefully

about how they behave. She has built up positive relationships with parents. She makes her expectations clear to the staff and is carefully following the correct procedures for supporting an underperforming teacher, combining support and challenge appropriately. However, the improvements she is trying to make are not having enough impact on the overall quality of provision or the pupils' achievement, and the school is not making sufficient progress overall. Weaknesses in some of the teaching have not been resolved, and the process of school improvement needs to develop greater forward momentum. The lack of progress invariably reflects negatively on the acting headteacher's leadership and management.

The co-ordination of subjects is still underdeveloped as the acting headteacher is focusing on improving classroom practice.

The chair of governors has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a realistic understanding of where the school is in terms of its progress through special measures. The governors are supporting the school well.

The school's current capacity for further improvement is limited because of the weaknesses in some of the teaching.

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

- 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 – inadequate progress.

External support

The local authority has provided considerable support to the school, particularly in staff development that has focused on teaching and learning. It has also provided considerable management support to the acting headteacher, including monitoring the school's progress. This support is helping to improve the educational provision at Key Stage 1 but has not made sufficient impact on developing the practice in Key Stage 2, which remains unsatisfactory, and is a major impediment to the school's progress through special measures. The LEA is providing the school with a significant amount of extra funding to provide the acting headteacher with more management time.

Main Judgements.

Progress since being subject to special measures - inadequate progress.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – inadequate progress.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve teaching, especially Key Stage 2.
- Develop the use of the teaching assistants to make them more effective.
- Continue the work started on tracking the pupils, in order to set them appropriate targets.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Chief Education Officer for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Colin Humphreys
H M Inspector