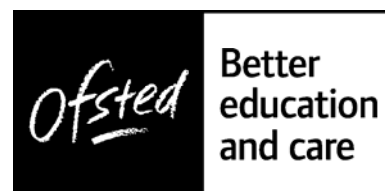


Cambridge Education
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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

Ofsted helpline
0845 640 4045



05 January 2006

Mr I Langston
Headteacher
Sutton Bridge Westmere Community Primary School
Anne Road
Sutton Bridge
Spalding Lincolnshire
PE12 9TB

Dear Mr Langston

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SUTTON BRIDGE WESTMERE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Mr P Weston HMI and Mr J Francis, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 December, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in January 2004.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Evidence

Inspectors observed thirteen lessons and two assemblies, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior staff, groups of pupils, a governor, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit in May 2005, a newly qualified teacher has been appointed to teach the reception class and there is a new leader for Key Stage 1. The senior teaching assistant conducts a programme of intervention lessons in literacy and numeracy for selected pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Achievement and standards

In 2005, results in national tests taken at the end of Year 2 improved on those for 2004 and were broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school was below the national average and, therefore, progress was good. Results in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 improved in English and mathematics but fell significantly in science. Attainment in mathematics was broadly in line with the average. Attainment in English was below average and in science it was well below average. Pupils made inadequate progress between Year 2 and Year 6 with girls performing less well overall than boys.

In lessons, standards in mathematics are below national expectations. Pupils are generally confident in their number work but too many lack basic numeracy skills. Pupils' oral and mental skills are mostly appropriate. However, not all have the rapid recall of tables and number bonds necessary to improve their rate of work and progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show a good range of strategies for working out and checking their answers. Standards in English are also below national expectations. In all classes, a minority of pupils write fluently and accurately but most lack adequate control of sentence construction and range of vocabulary for their age. In general, pupils talk hesitantly and again lack the fluency necessary to answer questions in depth and to explain their views. However, the school has rightly identified the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills as a priority.

The school's regular assessments are effective in tracking pupils' progress in the core subjects. Pupils are identified accurately for the intervention programmes in literacy and numeracy. The assessments show progress and standards which vary between years and are lower in Years 4 and 6. These concerns have been accurately identified and the school has put strategies into place to bring about improvements.

Standards and achievement are inadequate overall but slowly improving. This confirms the school's judgement of its current performance.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development, well-being and behaviour are satisfactory. Relationships overall are satisfactory. Pupils get on well with each other and are generally polite and helpful. They are encouraged to think about the feelings of others through the personal, social and health education programme. Older pupils are beginning to transfer what they learn here to their own behaviour and attitudes. Pupils generally show sound attitudes to work and older pupils in particular concentrated well for long periods. A few younger pupils have poorer attention and listening skills; they chatter to those around them. This is more often seen in Key Stage 1.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. However, the noisy entry and exit to an assembly reduced the sense of it being a spiritual occasion. Members of the school council enjoy the responsibilities placed

upon them. They make sensible suggestions for improving aspects of the school; for example, creating quiet areas in the playground.

Through the support of the learning mentor, the school has worked well to raise the levels of attendance, which are now in line with the national average. Most children arrive on time.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching was satisfactory overall and inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation based on regular lesson observations. Just over one third of the lessons seen were good and there were no inadequate lessons. All the good teaching occurred in Key Stage 2. This is a satisfactory improvement since the last monitoring visit. However, a higher proportion of good teaching is required to have the strong impact which is needed to raise standards sufficiently and to improve pupils' progress further.

Where teaching was good, lessons were clearly planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers gave clear explanations and challenged pupils with the result that they made good progress. Good questioning by teachers encouraged the pupils to participate and to check their progress. The use of partners for discussion improved pupils' understanding of and response to their work. Relationships between teachers and pupils were good. Teachers managed behaviour well.

Where teaching was satisfactory, teachers' expectations were not as high, the pace of lessons less brisk and pupils were often too dependent on their teacher. Teachers did not challenge all of the pupils. This resulted in some of them losing interest because the work did not encourage them to think or participate. There was too little independent working and teachers did not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or small groups or in practical activities. Teachers were occasionally too tolerant of behaviour which distracted others and impeded their progress.

Teachers increasingly use detailed assessment data in their planning. As a result, a greater proportion of teaching is taking account of pupils' learning needs. Most teachers set appropriate tasks and targets related to pupils' capability. Teaching assistants often play a significant part in helping the pupils to learn and this is a good feature of the school's work. The quality of marking is variable. Work is generally marked regularly and is positive in its tone. When linked to clear targets for improvement, it gives pupils a good idea of how to improve their work. However, this is not consistent across all classes. Too few classrooms have good displays of pupils' written work and do not create a literacy environment to celebrate or extend pupils' work in English.

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. A great deal of time is rightly dedicated to literacy and numeracy. However, there is insufficient planning which links subjects to make learning more effective and challenging. For example, in a design and technology lesson, no reference was made to relevant literacy work or literacy targets when pupils wrote an evaluation of their Christmas

cards. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning in other subjects. Specialist music tuition benefits pupils and this is a practical activity which many enjoy. Good arrangements are in place for those who have learning difficulties and other needs. These are most effective when support staff enable pupils to do similar work to their peers in class. The programme of intervention for some older pupils in literacy, numeracy and social skills is increasingly effective

The school provides satisfactory care for the pupils and secure procedures are in place to guide and support them and ensure their safety. Most pupils feel safe and know who to go to if they have problems. Staff are aware of the procedures for the protection of children. Pupils are supported in their academic work through the individual comments from teachers and target setting. Recent developments in target setting have given pupils a clearer idea of what is expected of them and what they need to do to improve. Pupils who find their learning difficult or have disabilities generally receive good support in lessons and improvements to planning means that teachers now provide a better match of work to the needs of these pupils.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2004:

- improve the quality of the teaching so that pupils make good progress and achieve the standards they should – satisfactory progress
- ensure the special educational needs of pupils are given full consideration in all lessons - good progress
- to meet statutory requirements, agree a policy detailing the school's proposals for dealing with pupils with disabilities - satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides sound leadership. He has introduced greater accountability for staff and more rigorous monitoring of performance and outcomes. The formation of a core leadership team supported by an extended leadership team is a good basis for agreeing policy and improving the consistency of practice. The development groups, which involve all teachers, have produced good plans for the improvement of key aspects of the school's work. It is now important for the broad range of initiatives in the school to be consolidated so that their impact brings about the necessary improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

The school's analysis of test and assessment information is accurate and identifies appropriate pupils for extra assistance and, also, areas of learning to be improved. The leaders of the core subjects and special educational needs increasingly identify relevant strategies for improvement and conduct more regular monitoring of progress.

The headteacher's reports to the governors and the school's evaluation of its performance contain effective analysis of test results and assessment data. However, there remains too much description of actions taken with insufficient evidence of their impact. Records of observations of lessons are generally accurate but require more specific advice to teachers on increasing the rate of pupils' progress and improving the quality of learning.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory and improving. Governors provide good support in some priority areas and make regular visits to the school. The detail provided in the headteacher's reports and evidence gathered themselves enables governors to hold the school to account more effectively. Governors need to review the school's progress against the targets set in its action plan.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2004:

- establish a clear direction for the school and a rigorous strategy for improvement – satisfactory progress

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support for the headteacher and the school. Consultants give appropriate advice and guidance to subject leaders. There are good opportunities for teachers to meet with staff from other local schools and to learn from good practice. The school improvement officer has rightly reduced the amount of direct guidance for the school this term to encourage greater accountability and independence.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Priorities for further improvement

- combine the various initiatives undertaken by the school into effective and consistent action to improve pupils' progress
- continue to develop the leadership skills of Key Stage and subject leaders by providing adequate time for them to monitor teaching and learning and the impact of their action plans
- improve pupils' rates of progress in the core subjects by implementing consistent and effective strategies which encourage and develop pupils' independence in their learning.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education and Cultural Services for Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg
H M Inspector