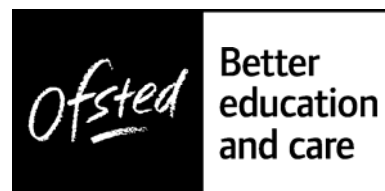


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Mrs S Lloyd  
The Headteacher  
Sutton Benger C of E Aided Primary School  
40 Chestnut Road  
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Wiltshire  
SN15 4RP

28 February 2006

Dear Mrs Lloyd

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SUTTON BENGER C OF E AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit to your school on 1 and 2 February 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

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

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, the acting assistant head, the mathematics coordinator, representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority (LA). Six lessons or part lessons and one class assembly were observed. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection a new headteacher took up her post in September 2005. Two of the five classes are currently taught by temporary teachers. Two further teachers are leaving at the end of term four and the school is seeking replacements.

## **Achievement and standards**

Standards achieved in the 2005 end of Key Stage 2 national tests were above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Standards are well above average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science. Progress in each of these subjects is satisfactory. Progress is good in Year 6 because of the good teaching which challenges and interests pupils. In Years 3 and 4 progress is limited as teaching is less strong. In Key Stage 1 standards have continued to decline although they are broadly average. Standards in writing, although still broadly average, have fallen below the national average. As a result of weak teaching, pupils do not consolidate their writing skills and have insufficient opportunity to develop their skills in more extended writing. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress as planning is informed by assessment of children's needs and aptitudes.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2005

- raise standards for seven year olds by improving teaching and learning in the infants-inadequate progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are good. Where teaching is good pupils are fully involved in learning and enjoy their work. In the Reception class for example children followed instructions for simple physical activities from one of their peers who was designated as the teacher. Others took on organisational responsibilities with the minimum of fuss. Even where teaching was inadequate pupils are well behaved and are able to control the sense of frustration they feel when they are unable to make progress. Pupils are well behaved at play time, lunch time and on school visits. They are polite and courteous to visitors. Many have healthy snacks during the day and exercise well through play at break times.

## **Quality of provision**

The quality of teaching and learning overall is inadequate but there are signs of improvement as a result of the effective leadership of the headteacher. Teachers' medium and short term planning, including lesson planning for example, is improving through more collaborative approaches and whole school procedures enabling good practice to be shared.

Where teaching is good, tasks and activities are planned for groups and individuals of different abilities enabling all pupils to make good progress. Good teaching also features effective use of the interactive whiteboard by both teacher and pupils which gains and maintains the pupils' interest. Pupils' learning is enhanced by good questions which require them to provide well thought out explanations for their answers.

In satisfactory lessons there is clear planning for pupils of different abilities but teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. The school has introduced effective systems of tracking pupil progress but this information does not yet consistently inform planning. Where teaching is inadequate pupils make limited progress as pupils of widely differing ability are asked to complete the same tasks. In one lesson, for example, pupils were asked to write an account of their recent visit to a museum. Many pupils were unsure how to start the written work and achieved little. Others were able to make good progress initially but finished well before the time allocated and achieved little else.

Systems for analysing pupils' performance are beginning to enable teachers to respond to specific areas for improvement. Analysis of mathematics data, for example, revealed gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and underachievement by girls in one year group. These issues are being tackled through monitoring by the mathematics coordinator and support for class teachers provided by the LA. It is too early to make a judgement on the effectiveness of this and other similar interventions.

The deployment of teaching assistants (TA) varies. In a satisfactory lesson two TAs operated effectively. One TA provided good support for three pupils, one of whom had a statement of special educational need. The other TA focused on a different group but offered effective support to a range of pupils through challenging questioning and enthusiastic encouragement. In another lesson however, the TA was not deployed effectively. She supported pupils who were able to work independently and not those pupils who were not making progress. Marking of pupils' work is often thorough and diagnostic but does not always inform the pupils how their work can be improved.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2005

- help staff be more effective at checking and tracking pupils' progress so they can plan a curriculum and lessons that match the learning needs of pupils with different capabilities—inadequate progress.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management, including governance, is satisfactory overall. The new headteacher, together with the governing body, has successfully focused the school on improving pupils' achievement. The school community shares her vision for improvement. The headteacher has introduced a number of management systems, particularly in planning and assessment, which are beginning to improve the quality of teaching. This has been hindered by the unstable staffing situation, which is set to continue. The development work is underpinned by thorough monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher supported by the LA. This monitoring has helped bring about some improvements in teaching but these are fragile and have not yet improved pupil achievement. The governing body and the headteacher have

an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body's own improved monitoring is helping governors to hold the school to account more effectively. The governing body is providing effective support for the headteacher in shaping the school's development in the immediate future and in the longer term. The headteacher has improved communications with parents through the publication of a fortnightly newsletter which includes items such as 'progress on the post Ofsted action plan'. The governing body is offering parents the opportunity to attend 'open forum' meetings where they can discuss issues with governors. As yet systematic collection of parent views does not take place.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2005

- put in place effective management systems and procedures that clearly focus on raising achievement and enable staff and governors to acquire the skills to evaluate the impact of their development actions and spending decisions to improve teaching and learning especially in Years 1 to 4—satisfactory progress
- keep parents informed of developments and take account of their views—satisfactory progress.

### **External support**

The quality of support provided by the LA is satisfactory overall. Initially the support for the school lacked focus and the school was unclear how the support should operate. This has been improved. The support provided is having a positive impact on the quality of leadership, management and governance. For example, governors have been well supported in their deliberations about staffing and the work of the LA literacy and numeracy team has provided effective support for some of the initial improvements made since the last inspection. The LA's statement of action has led to improvements in the governors' action plan which is now satisfactory.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures is inadequate as the improvements in teaching and learning are at a very early stage and have yet to bring sustained improvement in pupil achievement.

The quality of LA's statement of action is satisfactory although the target date for removal of special measures is optimistic.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure monitoring of teaching and learning focuses on the progress made by pupils.
- Ensure planning for groups and individuals of different ability is consistent and rigorously implemented.
- Set in place clear plans for effective transition so changes in staffing do not hinder pupils' achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director for Children and Education for Wiltshire and the Board of Education for the Diocese of Bristol.

Yours sincerely

Tom Winskill  
**H M Inspector**