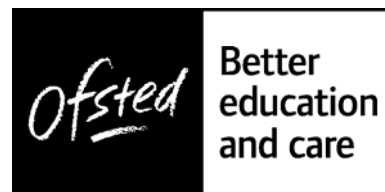


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Mrs A Norcross  
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5 July 2006

Dear Mrs Norcross

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF EAST HUNTSPILL SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit to your school on 28 and 29 June 2006, 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 October 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**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, the teaching staff, a group of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit, a senior member of staff is on leave due to ill-health and a supply teacher is covering the absence. A part time teacher has returned from long term sick leave and the teacher covering her absence has now left. A full time teacher has been appointed for one year from September to teach the Year 5/6 class.

## **Achievement and standards**

From observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, and the school's assessment and monitoring information, standards in English and mathematics are judged to be average overall. Children in the Foundation Stage start school attaining levels in their learning which are broadly average with particular strengths in aspects of mathematical development and communication, language and literacy. Some have difficulties within personal, social and emotional development, although many have made good progress in this area. Recent assessments show that the majority of the children should reach the levels expected by the end of the year and have made satisfactory progress.

At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils attain above average standards in reading and mathematics and near average in writing. Attainment in Year 1 is below average and many pupils have made insufficient progress since the end of Foundation Stage. The majority of pupils in Year 2 make at least satisfactory progress with particular strengths in reading and mathematics. All pupils reached the level expected nationally in mathematics and the school's target for increasing the number of pupils attaining the higher level in writing was also met. The local authority's moderation of the 2006 test results for Year 2 shows almost total agreement with the school's assessments.

Standards attained by pupils in Years 3 and 4 are above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Most pupils in Year 5 attain average standards in English and mathematics and over half attain above average levels in reading. The results of the national assessments for Year 6 pupils show significant improvements since last year, particularly in mathematics where the numbers reaching or exceeding the expected levels have more than doubled. However, standards remain below average in English and mathematics and are average in science. More pupils gained the higher level in these subjects than last year and results show that some pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities made excellent progress. The English results were lowered by poorer standards in writing than reading. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 make at least satisfactory progress in reading and writing and for some the rate of improvement is exceptional, but it is less marked in mathematics.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are making at least satisfactory progress and many are doing particularly well in English and mathematics as support has been aimed at their specific needs. Learning support assistants (LSAs) and teachers work very effectively to help these pupils to do their best and to have confidence in their ability to succeed. Carefully focused work with specific year groups is also helping pupils to make better progress.

The school has now had time to establish its assessment and monitoring systems more securely. This has resulted in more challenging targets which

have helped raise standards significantly. The consistent use of curricular targets in Key Stage 2 has also been a key factor in improvement. The impact of accurate assessments and well focused intervention strategies for groups of pupils is evident in their improved standards and faster rate of progress. Almost all the pupils in Years 3 and 4 have reached their very challenging curricular targets, as have the majority of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Targets were not used as rigorously in Key Stage 1. Pupils know their targets and appreciate them being displayed as reminders. The older pupils say that these help them to work harder and to know what they have to achieve.

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

- raise standards of pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics – good.

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

This is not an area for improvement and was not monitored on this visit. A recent development, however, is the new play committee which gives pupils greater opportunities to make a contribution to school life. They have been involved in democratic decision making regarding the purchase of new playground equipment.

### **Quality of provision**

The majority of teaching is good or better and none is inadequate. Lessons are planned thoroughly and have very clear objectives for pupils' learning taking full account of their age and ability. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are extremely well supported in class through very careful deployment of LSAs and in group work outside the classroom. The needs of the potentially higher attaining pupils are considered carefully and these pupils try hard to meet the raised expectations. Teachers evaluate the outcomes of lessons thoroughly to inform what they do next.

Very good use is made of pupils' own evaluations to identify strengths and possible areas for improvement. This was seen in a lesson on fractions where pupils reviewed their self-assessments from the previous day. The teacher skilfully helped them to understand how mistakes had been made and could be remedied. Good teaching ensures pupils are challenged effectively and that the pace of learning is fast, yet allows them time to think and consider their responses. Staff use questions very effectively to assess pupils' learning, often providing additional challenges to make pupils think harder. Most marking of work is accurate and gives pupils a clear indication of what they have done well and how they could do better. Teachers use curricular targets very effectively when assessing pupils' learning and to inform planning.

Pupils demonstrate great enthusiasm in lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard, behave extremely well, and know their answers and opinions will be respected. This was seen particularly when

pupils were trying to devise persuasive language for an advertisement and in another class when they used calculators to find percentages of a sum of money. All groups are equally eager to do their best.

Staff make good use of resources including the interactive whiteboards. These are used proficiently to enthuse and motivate pupils. All pupils enjoy using them especially the youngest children who readily offer their answers and are so proud when 'very well done' is displayed on the board. Classrooms have a broad range of interesting and exciting displays which celebrate pupils' achievements as well as offering incentives and guidance on how to improve.

There are good examples of improvements in pupils' writing across the curriculum especially in history and geography in Key Stage 2. It was also good to see accurate use of time related words, such as 'first', 'next' and 'then' to connect aspects of pupils' design and technology reports.

Teachers have received a high level of support from local authority staff and this has been valued. However, there has been limited opportunity for them to reflect on, try out and evaluate the impact of the advice and guidance.

The curriculum, although not a focus of this visit, has been enriched by a number of popular lunchtime clubs, both indoor and outdoor including a range of sports and creative activities.

Care, guidance and support were not inspected on this visit. However, due to the changes in staffing, the headteacher has taken the responsibility for child protection and has recently received detailed training to fit her for this role.

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

- ensure that teaching meets the needs of all pupils by age and ability – good.

## **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management team knows the school very well and has taken effective actions to move it forward. The headteacher has worked hard together with the staff team to ensure outcomes for pupils improve. The systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are proving successful in identifying where there are gaps in learning and to help the staff set challenging targets. The specific needs of groups of pupils are supported intensively to help them make faster progress. The school's improvement plan is thorough and incorporates the measurable targets set by the local authority. The actions taken to support teaching and learning during major staff changes have been managed efficiently to help maintain effective provision for all pupils. Staff remain a highly committed team with a clear vision for the school's improvement.

The governors are now settled and make excellent use of the support and training provided by the local authority. They are very well led and are developing the skills to help them support and challenge the school more rigorously. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths, and where it needs to do better, through visits to classes and the receipt of accurate information on progress and attainment from the headteacher.

The effective leadership has managed the school's targets for raising attainment and achievement very well and results, whilst average overall, show significant improvement over last year. The headteacher has carried out very thorough monitoring of teaching and learning to identify where support is needed and where there is expertise to be shared. The focus on improving the learning for all ages and abilities is evident in the quality of lessons observed.

Middle managers have taken on new responsibilities very conscientiously and are ensuring that they are fully informed. They are receiving appropriate training and have set up productive links with other professionals. For example, a specialist officer from the local authority is to meet and advise the new special educational needs coordinator.

Additional financial help from the local authority has been carefully aligned with the school's improvement plan. The school has made significant progress since the last visit and shows good capacity to improve.

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

- ensure that leadership and management have detailed and measurable targets for school improvement – good.

### **External support**

Since the last visit, the local authority has provided considerable support including advanced skills teachers, literacy and numeracy consultants and other advisers. Additional funding this term has helped the school to allocate time for staff to meet with other professionals. The local authority has now set clearly measurable targets for the school's leadership and management. The core group meets regularly and is providing objective monitoring of the school's progress and informed advice on improvements.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- To improve standards in writing.
- To give teachers time to reflect on new ideas and initiatives, to build on the advice given, and to integrate developments into the school's plan for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Somerset.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wheeler  
**H M Inspector**