

Cambridge Education  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01223 578500  
Direct F 01223 578501  
risp.inspections@camb-ed.com



21 November 2008

Mr J Mason  
Headteacher  
Belton Lane Community Primary School  
Green Lane  
Grantham  
Lincolnshire  
NG31 9PP

Dear Mr Mason

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Belton Lane Community Primary School

Following my visit with Anna Coyle, Additional Inspector, to your school on 5-6 November, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – *good*

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – *good*

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg  
H M Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Belton Lane Community Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 5-6 November 2008

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, key staff, groups of pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.

## Context

Three teachers joined the school in September 2008. There are now no teaching vacancies or temporary posts.

## Achievement and standards

Children enter the Foundation Stage with knowledge, understanding and skills well below those found nationally. The school's assessment information for last year indicates that they made sound progress through to the end of the Reception year and better progress in developing personal and social skills.

The provisional results for Year 2 pupils who were assessed in summer 2008 show that they reached standards that were broadly average in mathematics and below average in reading and writing. These results improved on the previous year, particularly in mathematics. The school's evaluation indicates that pupils made satisfactory progress from their starting points.

Provisional results for the Year 6 pupils who took national tests in summer 2008 indicate that they reached standards that were broadly average in mathematics and science and below average in English. This was a marked improvement on the previous year and exceeded the targets set for the school. However, standards in writing were lower than those in reading and no pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in writing or in English. The school's evaluation of these results indicates that pupils made at least satisfactory and often good progress from their starting points.

The school records detailed information on pupils' performance and tracks their progress carefully. The information for 2007-08 confirmed the generally good progress made by pupils in Year 6 and also in Year 1. In other years, the majority of pupils made the progress expected of them but a minority did not improve their basic skills sufficiently to reach the levels expected for their age. This was particularly the case in lower Key Stage 2 classes and with writing in most years. Although it is early in the new school year, the school's tracking information for current pupils broadly matches that of last year with most progress in Years 1 and 6 and less in other years.

In the lessons observed pupils made generally satisfactory progress and good progress in over half. This was an improvement on the situation at the last visit. Pupils showed good attitudes to learning and tried hard. Where teaching was

effective, they were clear about what they were expected to learn and applied themselves well, often showing good collaboration and independence in their work. However, in a minority of lessons pupils were not clear what they were to learn. Gaps in pupils' basic knowledge and skills sometimes limited their progress on the tasks set for them. For example, some mid Key Stage 2 pupils needed close teacher support to practice using descriptive words in their writing although their ability to form sentences correctly was not secure.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise pupils' achievement and standards considerably by the end of Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics by improving significantly the quality of teaching, enabling all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. – *good*

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils behave well and enjoy school. They form positive relationships with each other and say that they feel safe. They know how to stay fit by eating healthily and taking part in physical exercise. Levels of attendance continue to improve and are currently satisfactory. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by participating in the school council and by acting as 'bird buddies' and class monitors. They develop adequate skills for their future well-being.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved since the last visit. All the lessons were at least satisfactory and a greater proportion than last time was good or better. However, there is still variation in the quality of teaching and this does affect pupils' progress in some classes. Where teaching and learning are most effective, there are very clear objectives, strongly focused on what pupils need to learn. Teachers' planning is detailed and concentrates on how the pupils will learn, with work closely matched to their different levels of understanding and skills. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly during the lesson and emphasise key targets and criteria for success. Lessons have a brisk pace and pupils participate in a wide range of activities which stimulate their interest. Relationships are very good and pupils have the confidence to work independently and to assess their own work using their targets and specific criteria.

Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, teachers' planning often lacks clarity and objectives for learning are insufficiently precise. Work is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs and, too often, all are expected to complete the same task. As a result, some pupils struggle to get started on work and need help from the teacher. A small number are not challenged as much as they could be. The time

taken by teachers to re-explain tasks or to settle individuals to work slows the pace of the lesson and also slows learning and progress. Often, weaknesses in pupils' basic skills further affect their progress.

Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally well supported and receive effective additional help from the teacher or teaching assistants. In the best lessons, work is adapted for their needs and linked strongly to the skills they need to practise. Teaching assistants focus on learning and provide helpful reinforcement of the key steps that pupils need to take to improve.

Assessment procedures have improved satisfactorily since the previous visit, and this is still a developing area. Pupils now have layered targets to help them improve their work in literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 2, and the school is increasing its use of individual targets in other subjects. However, the use of assessment information to inform planning is still inconsistent in some year groups where teachers take insufficient account of prior learning to match work to pupils' needs. Staff have discussed and revised the policy on marking and feedback since the last visit and it is now used far more consistently. Pupils recognise the main symbols used by teachers and understand how teachers' comments help them to improve their work. The marking policy is increasingly used across a range of subjects. Older pupils said that they assessed their own work regularly and there was evidence in their books of them reviewing progress against their targets. They know their targets and what they need to do to improve further. In the more effective lessons, teachers encouraged pupils to review their work with partners.

Staff have made good progress in developing the school's curriculum. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum has been introduced satisfactorily so that children in the Nursery and Reception classes have full access to an appropriate balance of indoor and outside activities. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the new curriculum teams have worked hard to link subjects together to make learning more interesting for the pupils although this work is at an early stage. They are developing themed approaches to learning and have devised suitable action plans for each subject. These initiatives are creating some effective cross-curricular links between subjects, such as in the use of information and communication technology to support learning in other areas. However, as recorded elsewhere, in some classes teachers do not yet match work closely enough to pupils' needs and attainment with the consequence that there is not always appropriate progression of knowledge and skills for all. Pupils are given sound opportunities to learn a modern foreign language by participating in French lessons. An improved range of enrichment activities includes exciting opportunities for older pupils to learn a brass or wind instrument.

Suitable arrangements are in place for ensuring the health and welfare of pupils. The headteacher effectively oversees the provision for child protection and ensures that staff receive regular training. All adults are checked carefully to ensure that they are suitable to work with children, and pupils are kept safe.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure assessment is accurate and always used to inform planning. – *satisfactory*
- Involve pupils in assessing their own work so that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. – *good*

- Improve the curriculum to ensure that pupils encounter stimulating activities to sustain their interest and make sure that their developing needs are met through well-planned progression of knowledge and skills in all subjects. - *satisfactory*

## Leadership and management

The headteacher provides clear vision and direction for the school and has encouraged senior staff to take on greater responsibilities since the last visit. They now work closely as a team and share a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The deputy headteacher has participated in school self evaluation and development planning, and also contributes to governors' meetings. There is a detailed timetable of monitoring activities delegated to key senior staff and linked to governors' roles. The subject leaders for English and mathematics have conducted regular scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. They have also observed lessons. They have identified areas for improvement and organised appropriate training for staff as a consequence. The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school and of its strengths and weaknesses.

There is an effective system for monitoring the school's progress against the key action points from the last inspection. These are carefully tracked against the 'milestones' agreed with the local authority. This progress is reported to governors and to the joint committee formed with the local authority. The findings from this monitoring have been effectively used to revise the school's development plan.

While the leaders for core subjects have well-established roles, the staff who have recently taken on responsibility for other subjects have not yet had time to develop their roles in a similar way. However, the curriculum teams formed this year provide a good opportunity for more experienced staff to model leadership and monitoring skills and to support less experienced colleagues. These newly-formed groups provide an exciting opportunity for staff to discuss the curriculum, integrate the planning of subjects and share expertise.

Governors have extended their role in evaluating the performance of the school through more regular visits. Governors are also linked to the new curriculum teams. One governor has trialled a specific evaluation of an approach to writing, with the assistance of the literacy subject leader, as an example for other governors to follow. The governors continue to scrutinise the school's progress against the 'milestones' agreed by the local authority. However, not all governors are directly engaged in these evaluation activities.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Strengthen governance, senior and middle management by adopting a robust approach to self-evaluation, delegating roles and responsibilities and building the skills necessary for effective leadership. – *good*

## External support

The local authority continues to provide effective support to aid the improvement of the school. Two additional governors contribute to the evaluation of the school's performance and provide experience of other educational settings. The local authority has supported the school through a number of specific training packages to improve tracking of pupils' progress and develop teaching and assessment. Specific support has been provided for teachers in the EYFS and for others with particular needs. Extra advice and guidance has been negotiated from local expert teachers. The local authority has reduced the level of support as the school has shown greater confidence in managing its improvement.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that pupils in all years make at least expected progress and that those with weak basic skills make better progress, especially in writing, to enable them to close the gap against national expectations.
- Ensure that all teachers plan lessons thoroughly to match learning closely to the differing needs and attainment of pupils.