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08 July 2009

Ms Nicola Davies  
Headteacher  
Sutton Road Primary School  
Moor Lane  
Mansfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG18 5SF

Dear Ms Davies

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Sutton Road Primary School

Following my visit with Trevor Watts and Bob Roberts (Additional Inspectors) to your school on 17 and 18 June 2009, 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 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since the previous monitoring visit – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

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 Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne  
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2009



## Special measures: monitoring of Sutton Road Primary School Report from the second monitoring inspection on 17 – 18 June 2009

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governor representatives and a school improvement advisor from the local authority.

### Context

There have been a small number of alterations in the middle and senior management team. An acting deputy headteacher has been appointed for this term and the local authority has secured another acting deputy headteacher for the next academic year. Governors' roles are still specifically linked to the points for improvement from the last inspection and governors continue to meet regularly as a full governing body. The school retains its link with another Nottinghamshire primary school for support.

### Achievement and standards

The school's data shows that the standards attained at the end of Year 2 in 2009 were better than in 2008, specifically in reading and mathematics. Levels of attainment in writing were very similar to 2008. The number of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment (Level 3) is increasing in all areas. Despite these encouraging signs, standards remain significantly below national averages, particularly in writing, which continues to be a focus for improvement. For the pupils reaching the end of Year 6, the school's data suggests that levels of attainment are lower than those reached in 2008, both in English and mathematics. Standards in science were broadly in line with the national average in 2008. Outcomes for 2009 were not available on this visit.

The overall progress made by pupils is satisfactory. This was the case in the vast majority of lessons and is supported by the school's own tracking system. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are making good progress overall, with good progress in reading and mathematics and satisfactory progress in writing. In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory in all areas. Rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are improving overall but are inconsistent across all Key Stage 2 year groups. For example some year groups make rapid progress, while in others rates of progress are too slow.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are consistently making satisfactory and, in many cases, good progress. More accurate assessment systems are now in place in the Nursery and in Reception. Children come into the Nursery and Reception with levels of development that are well below expectations for their age. Tracking systems are too new to show children's progress over time, but moderation by the local authority shows that teachers' assessments of children's writing and use of numbers as labels is accurate. It is too early to judge whether children are making



consistent progress over the Early Years Foundation Stage, but the new Early Years Foundation Stage Co-ordinator is focussed on ensuring greater consistency of provision and practice as, by the time they enter Year 1, children's levels of development are still below what they should be.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Accelerate the progress that children make so that they attain higher standards, especially in English – satisfactory

### Personal development and well-being

The rate of attendance has not altered; it is still low, despite strong efforts by the school and outside agencies to monitor and improve it. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They show they are often eager to learn and willing to join in with activities, whether individually or in small groups. Sometimes they become restless if the lesson is too long. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although pupils' awareness of other cultures is not always secure and well-informed. Assemblies now meet the requirements for collective worship. They include good moral and spiritual aspects, and regular opportunities for celebration. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum has done much to improve pupils' awareness of their own feelings and development, following a particular programme to assist social and emotional learning. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and that there is little or no bullying. Their awareness of how to be safe and healthy is satisfactory with regard to what they eat and drink, taking regular exercise and avoiding dangers on the roads or at home. Many pupils help each other responsibly, whether as 'reading buddies' or 'talk partners', helping to run stalls at schools fairs to raise funds for charity, or being their class representative on the school council.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are very few inadequate lessons and more good lessons than previously. Teachers continue to enjoy good relationships with pupils, and pupils relate well to each other, working together effectively. Their behaviour is managed well, although sometimes restlessness goes unnoticed, especially as some teachers take too long over the introduction to lessons and when the pace in lessons is too slow. Conversely, some teachers accelerate the pace of a lesson too much, and then some pupils do not have time to absorb and understand all that is being explained. Generally, teachers' questions are appropriate and well adapted to different pupils. However, there are times when this is not the case and some pupils do not fully understand what they are expected to do. Sometimes pupils are asked to work in pairs or groups for a while, leading to some productive thinking. On other occasions, this causes pupils to chat off-task with a friend. Similarly, some groups working independently can lose their focus on what they should be doing, and the teacher may not notice quickly enough. There are times when lessons are too long, especially in literacy and mathematics which fill a morning between them.



Overall, lesson planning is generally good, with clear adaptation of aims and activities for groups of pupils of differing abilities. Occasionally, some of the tasks teachers set take pupils too long to complete, such as writing a title or the learning objective. However, teachers mostly prepare and organise their lessons soundly, adhering to the plans and structure, especially in literacy and mathematics, which are among the best planned lessons. The planning is based well upon a clear understanding of pupils' progress and their current achievements. Teachers' marking contributes soundly to this process of assessment and more focused learning in lessons. Teachers are supported well by support staff, especially when prompting and encouraging pupils who are struggling with their work or their attention. Teachers use a range of resources satisfactorily. They use the information and communication technology (ICT), mathematical and scientific equipment well.

The curriculum continues to be satisfactory in its breadth, although the strong emphasis on mathematics and English tends to squeeze out some other subjects. These two basic subjects are sometimes practised and extended in other subjects, but not as much as they could be. Links between subjects are mainly satisfactory. Pupils mostly enjoy practical subjects, including mathematics, science, design and technology and ICT. Outside of mathematics and English, subject leaders do not have a clear enough understanding of the strengths and areas to improve in their subject, and the overall monitoring and co-ordination of the wider curriculum is still underdeveloped. ICT, however, is well advanced in moving to a new programme of study that merges ICT with literacy targets and activities. Pupils say that the visits they undertake are valuable and build on their understanding of what they have learned in class. Since the last monitoring visit, the learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. Nursery (F1) children take greater advantage of the outdoor area and the F2 area (for Reception classes) has been established with access to an outdoor area. Whilst space here is limiting, staff are making best use of it by putting out a variety of activities for children to use and extending the area for children's physical development. More improvements are necessary, but a realistic action plan has been put together with a sensible list of priorities, which includes embedding practice and continuing to monitor the quality of provision across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are working increasingly hard to forge stronger links between F1 and F2.

Care, guidance and support continues to be satisfactory. The regulations with regard to safeguarding pupils and checking staff suitability are solidly in place. Links with outside agencies continue to support some families and encourage better attendance. Pupils who have difficulties in their learning are soundly supported by accurate assessments of their progress and achievements, by careful planning to make sure that the teaching is right for them, and by capable classroom and learning support staff. This teaching may take place in separate groups or sets, or within the main classrooms. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory, with increasing signs that it is helpful in building up pupils' understanding of what they need to do next to improve. Pupils all have targets, but do not always remember them or understand them. Teachers are increasingly aware of how well their pupils



are making progress, and senior staff use the information to check how well different groups of pupils are progressing. However, having pupils in ability-grouped classes for English has meant that teachers are not sufficiently fully aware of all of their own pupils' progress, nor how well pupils could be writing in other subjects. The school has recognised this challenge and class teachers will revert to teaching English lessons to their own class from September.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Ensure that there is effective teaching and learning across the school, which consistently engages, motivates and challenges all groups of learners – satisfactory

### Leadership and management

The recently restructured extended leadership team is focussed on raising standards across the school. All involved have demonstrated their commitment and determination to improve the school as rapidly as possible. Following the last inspection there is now a unified 'Single Improvement Plan', which is providing clearer focus and direction. The monitoring and evaluation of literacy, numeracy and the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and co-ordinators in these areas understand the current position well and have a secure plan for driving change. Leadership in other subject areas has only recently changed and due to other priorities, the school has been slower to steer other areas of the curriculum forward. It is currently considering how to make the wider curriculum more effective and engaging and to embrace the leadership and management of other subject areas more thoroughly, including the potential links with literacy and numeracy. More good practice is being shared and some elements are starting to become embedded, for example the use of a common planning format, the inclusion of practical learning within lessons and the agreed use of teaching support. Better emphasis has been given in most lessons for accounting for the needs of all pupils, including those pupils who are capable of achieving more than the levels expected for their age. There is improved tracking of individuals and groups of pupils. The Early Years Foundation Stage is more effectively planned, taking full account of children's needs and interests. Since the beginning of June 2009, an appointment for someone to lead and manage this area has been made. There is further co-ordination in assessment across the Early Years Foundation Stage as is now seen across the rest of the school and new systems are working well, albeit at an embryonic stage.

The leadership team recognises that there is more to be done to consolidate and to further promote consistency across the school. Leaders and managers are endeavouring to ensure that agreed strategies are fully implemented by all staff. The evaluation of the school and its progress is now collaboratively tackled by staff and governors and the whole team is now taking greater ownership of it. Teachers are also more aware of their accountability. The governing body is more aware of its statutory responsibilities, particularly in respect of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and its role in other areas of monitoring. It now meets all of its responsibilities in



these respects. It rightly recognises the necessity to further build on the initial work that has begun and continue to monitor the school closely and hold the school to account. There is more work to do on widening the governors' understanding of the use of data, improving the curriculum (including for the Early Years Foundation Stage) and what they should be looking for in practice, so these provide the necessary focus for their monitoring visits. Communication between governors, and between the school and the governing body, has strengthened since the last inspection, so governors are better informed.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Establish a senior leadership team and middle management structure that clearly demonstrates a robust capacity to improve teaching, learning and standards quickly – satisfactory

#### External support

The school has received some good quality support from the local authority overall and in particular this has been further intensified to include governance and the Early Years Foundation Stage since the findings of the last visit. The school continues to take part in the intensified support programme (ISP) and works closely with a school improvement advisor and specialist consultants. Recent monitoring visits by the local authority identified that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and continues to improve. There was strong correlation between the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make at the end of the lesson. This corroborates with the inspection team's findings. The local authority rightly recognises that there is some variation in practice and that not all weak teaching has been totally removed, although it is reducing. With improved awareness between staff and governors, the use of assessment data across the school is improving. The local authority correctly prioritised supporting the development of the leadership and management roles and recognises that this continues to be a major priority until the recent and further restructuring embeds and strengthens over time. The local authority's evaluation of the school's improvement continues to be accurate and the local authority realises that the support given to the school to date is only just beginning to show impact.