

Serco Inspections  
2 Wythall Green  
Way  
Middle Lane  
Birmingham  
B47 6RW

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Direct T 0121 683 2033  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



6 November 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 Sue Hall and Keith Williams (Additional Inspectors) to your school on 4 and 5 November 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third 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

Special measures: monitoring of Sutton Road Primary School



Report from the third monitoring inspection on 04 – 05 November 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 academic year.

## Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

There has been some significantly accelerated progress in most year groups this year. The improving progress seen at the last visit has been maintained and extended more widely because of better teaching. In particular, the patchiness in progress found in Key Stage 2 is being eradicated because more lessons are good. This improvement is reflected in the provisional 2009 National Curriculum test results for Year 6 pupils, which show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 rose in English, mathematics and science. Within this positive picture, there was some variation. While the results for reading fell slightly, intensive work to raise writing standards at Key Stage 2 means that there was a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level. The school's performance at the higher Level 5 rose in mathematics, but results at Level 5 are likely to remain below the national picture in all three subjects, and this remains a priority for improvement. Nevertheless, the improving picture is also reflected in the school's records of pupils' progress and in their work in books and lessons. At Key Stage 1, attainment in writing at the expected levels is in line with the national average, although too few pupils achieved the higher Level 3. Attainment in reading and mathematics has also improved in Key Stage 1. This improvement is significant in mathematics at both the expected and higher levels. The gap in reading between the school and the national levels is reducing.

Underachievement is being tackled systematically. The strategies employed to raise standards are paying off so that, for example, the gap in performance between boys and girls is narrowing. Similarly, there are more classes showing at least the expected progress than was previously the case, but there is still more to do to ensure consistency in all year groups. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident independent writers but, for some, the basic skills of reading and writing are not sufficiently secure to enable them to make more rapid progress. A wide range of strategies is used to support them in class and in withdrawn groups and these are beginning to bear fruit. Many pupils find it difficult to write or to present their work neatly. For all pupils, including the most competent writers, there are too few

opportunities for them to develop their ideas by writing at length. Effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities means that they make similar progress to their classmates.

From starting points which are typically well below age-related expectations, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are mostly making good progress and the school now has in place a reliable system of tracking this. Closer transitional links between Nursery and Reception classes are enhancing children's progress in phonics and the improved transitional links between Reception and Year 1 have ensured that children's progress is less interrupted by the move, although children's levels of development are still generally 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

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Rates of attendance have increased slightly and are closer to expected levels. The school continues to make strong efforts to monitor and improve this, working closely with outside agencies. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons is evident. They show their eagerness to learn and display willingness to join in with activities, whether individually or in small groups. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although pupils' awareness of other cultures remains slight. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum has noticeably improved pupils' awareness of their own feelings and development following a particular programme to assist social and emotional learning. There has also been a focus on this in the Early Years Foundation Stage, doing much to raise younger children's self-awareness. Pupils say they feel safe in school because they know who to turn to if they are unhappy or have a problem. Relationships across the school are positive and behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. Pupils' knowledge of how to be safe and healthy is satisfactory and they understand about taking regular exercise and avoiding dangers inside or outside of school. The school does not promote a strong enough message about the importance of eating healthily and the contents of their packed lunches. Many pupils help each other responsibly, whether as 'reading buddies' or 'talk partners', which is now routinely established across the school. Class representatives continue to be elected onto the school council and these pupils take their roles seriously.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and improving. The school has eradicated inadequate lessons and there are more good lessons than previously, particularly in English and mathematics which has been the school's main focus. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is consistently good and there is some outstanding practice beginning to emerge. Teachers introduce lessons appropriately

and the pace in lessons is better, with less time wasted. There is less restlessness in lessons and therefore pupils more usually remain on task, although occasionally some pupils remain too passive, for example, quieter girls. Generally, teachers' questions are appropriate and well adapted to different pupils. They skilfully evaluate the teaching and learning to make decisions about what needs to be repeated or consolidated before they move learning on. Literacy lessons are interspersed with sessions of guided reading and developing phonic awareness, which are helping pupils' development of basic skills and breaking up the length of the sessions. Specialist teaching in some areas adds value to the curriculum and to pupils' enjoyment and personal development.

Lesson planning remains good, with clear adaptation of aims and activities for groups of pupils of differing abilities. There is valuable teamworking amongst staff to share their ideas and workload. Planning is now consistent in format across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Due to increasingly reliable data, which is reviewed regularly, the planning is based upon a clear understanding of pupils' progress and their current achievements. Occasionally, some pupils do not receive sufficient challenge. Teachers' marking and pupils' self-evaluation of their own work contributes soundly to the process of assessment, although this is not consistent in all lessons and does not always make clear what pupils need to do to improve. Assessment is more effective in English and mathematics and weaker in foundation subjects. Consequently, the challenge in some activities is not great enough for higher attaining pupils. Teachers are supported well by support staff who have undertaken much professional development alongside them. Teachers use the resources reasonably well, including the interactive whiteboards, to enhance pupils' learning. They also manage pupils' behaviour well and they create a positive and purposeful climate for learning.

The curriculum continues to be satisfactory. Links between subjects are developing. Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, are given more choice and undertake many practical activities. Staff are mostly aware of what they want pupils to learn, although they do not always communicate this effectively because of the size of the groups. Subject coordination outside of English and mathematics is improving, but staff recognise there is more to do here to lead their specialist areas and develop teacher assessment outside of the core subjects. Subject leaders have a clearer understanding of the strengths and areas to improve in their subject, including ensuring that there is sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils in all areas. Since the last monitoring visit, the coordination of the wider curriculum has been further developed and there is now a programme in place for monitoring and evaluating this. The learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage has further evolved. 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 development in all areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support continues to improve. The school takes its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils very seriously indeed. 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 takes place in separate groups or sets, or within the main classrooms. Just occasionally, teaching assistants do too much for pupils. Although clearly identified, younger pupils do not consistently remember or understand their targets. The school has ceased to have pupils in ability-grouped classes for English and they are now taught in class groups for this subject. Consequently, teachers are now more aware of their own pupils' progress in English. However, staff do not exploit all opportunities for extending writing in other subjects. Supervision and care of pupils in the playground is well organised although, when the play equipment is not presented, opportunities for co-operation and teamwork are missed and sometimes girls are not fully and actively involved.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The leadership team remains focussed on raising standards across the school. All involved are undeterred in their commitment to improving the school as rapidly as possible. There is far less reliance on external support and the headteacher is now able to confidently share the leadership responsibilities. The school continues to work to a unified 'Single Improvement Plan', which provides clear focus and direction. The monitoring and evaluation of literacy, numeracy and the Early Years Foundation Stage has been sustained and coordinators in these areas understand the current position well and have a secure plan for driving change. Leadership in other subject areas also continues to strengthen. With the arrival of the acting deputy headteacher and a clear structure for monitoring and leading the curriculum in all areas, the school is beginning to show early signs of moving forward. Potential cross-curricular links with literacy and numeracy are yet to be exploited, particularly in writing. There is sustained tracking of individuals and groups of pupils, including those pupils experiencing learning difficulties and disabilities and the youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The leadership team recognises that there is more to be done to consolidate and to further promote consistency across the school. 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 being accountable. 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 continues to meet all of its responsibilities in these respects and has worked hard since the last visit to monitor the school closely and hold it to account. Governors' understanding of the use of data, the curriculum and what they should be looking for in practice has improved, and these are now the focus for their monitoring visits. Communication between governors, and between the school and the governing body, has further strengthened since the last inspection, so governors are better informed. There are high quality regular information exchanges between the school and the governing body, which are mutually beneficial.

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 – good

External support

The school continues to receive good quality support from the local authority as and when this is necessary. The school has particularly benefited from support for governors and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which are now strong areas. The Improving Schools Programme (ISP) remains in place and staff continue to work closely with a school improvement advisor and specialist consultants in the areas that the school itself now identifies as priorities. Recent monitoring visits by the local authority identified that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and continues to improve. The local authority's evaluation of the school's improvement remains accurate and consistent with the inspection team findings. The local authority rightly recognises that developing consistency of practice across the school is the key to good improvement overall. The local authority's support in securing an acting deputy headteacher is already bearing fruit and the investment made in developing the senior leadership team has resulted in these staff fulfilling their roles well.