

Serco Inspections  
Boundary House  
2 Wythall Green Way  
Middle Lane  
BIRMINGHAM  
West Midlands  
B47 6LW

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0121 683 2048  
Direct email: victoria.mortimore2@serco.com



5 March 2010

Mrs Catherine Bonich  
Interim Headteacher  
Bentfield Primary School  
Rainsford Road  
Stansted Mountfitchet  
Essex  
CM24 8DX

Dear Mrs Bonich

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Bentfield Primary School

Following my visit with Nichola Perry, additional inspector, to your school on 3 - 4 March 2010, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – 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 Essex.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott

Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Bentfield Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 3 – 4 March 2010

## Evidence

Inspectors met with staff, governors, parents, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. They observed 12 lessons, involving nine teachers and checked pupils' work in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6.

## Context

Shortly after the last inspection in October 2009, the headteacher retired and an interim headteacher was appointed for two days a week, who from April 2010, has been appointed on a permanent basis. Since January 2010, an advisory headteacher has worked at the school for three days a week.

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

Achievement continues to be variable across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This is evident in the school's assessment records and confirmed by lesson observation and work scrutiny.

In the nursery, children develop good use of language because of the astute questions put to them by adults. Imaginative activities help them to develop mathematical skills. However, this good start in the nursery is not sufficiently consolidated in the reception year, where teaching is less well structured and children have less understanding of what they are supposed to learn.

In Year 1, pupils settle quickly and respond enthusiastically because the teacher models the activities for them. Some pupils achieve well, but others remain uncertain, so learning is satisfactory. Learning and progress are less effective in Year 2 because the teaching activities are not well matched to the learning objectives. Pupils do have enough opportunities to write to the standards expected in Year 2.

Lively teaching in Year 3 means that pupils now enjoy their lessons and make satisfactory progress, though not enough to recover the ground they lost last year. Learning is satisfactory in years 5 and 6, but a majority of pupils are still some way short of their targets. Older pupils enjoy using practical equipment and computers, but these activities did not promote enough new learning in the lessons observed.

## Judgement

Progress since the last inspection:

- Improve achievement, especially in Key Stage 1 – *inadequate*.

## Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils feel safe in school. Their attendance is now above average. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory and reflects the quality of teaching. Pupils are well focused on learning when they understand what is expected of them, but lose interest otherwise. Behaviour around the school is good and pupils show consideration for each other.

## The effectiveness of provision

The use of assessment data to inform planning is still at an early stage of development. Many teachers now give more thought to planning lessons to meet a range of learning needs, for example by stating explicitly what pupils must, should and could learn. Able pupils now know that they are expected to achieve the most challenging learning objectives, but teachers do not always make their expectations clear for other groups of pupils. Marking is regular but not always linked well to the learning objectives or pupils' individual targets. Sometimes pupils receive useful guidance on how to improve their work, but too often the marking is still not precise enough for this purpose.

While most teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory, two lessons were inadequate. It is clear from the work seen in pupils' books and folders that these are not isolated examples. Assessment in these classes is not always reliable. In the best lessons, one good and one outstanding, the teachers provided a good structure for learning, so all pupils were able to make progress.

The curriculum does not maximise pupils' learning over time, because there is not enough consistency in teaching approaches and some work is repeated unnecessarily. However, the school has sensibly focused on more urgent areas for improvement.

Pupils are confident that they know who to talk to if they have problems and they are well supervised during outdoor learning and play.

## Judgement

Progress since the last inspection:

- Use assessment data to improve planning to meet different needs and to identify clear, sharp targets for pupils – *inadequate*.

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

New monitoring systems have improved the quality of self-evaluation, which is now realistic. Teachers are now observed regularly and given guidance to help them improve. Governors now have a stream of reliable information that allows them to hold the school more effectively to account.

The school's action plan focuses well on the main priorities for improvement; other issues will be dealt with in the medium term. At present, most of the strategic direction and drive for improvement is provided by the interim and advisory headteachers.. The duties of other senior leaders have been clarified and there are plans to develop their strategic roles.

All teachers now provide regular assessments for each pupil in a common format that allows an oversight of progress across the school. Teachers now understand how they will be held to account for pupils' achievement.

Child protection training is up to date and all staff understand the reporting procedures. The vetting of staff and record keeping meet current requirements. The security of the school site is being improved and regular expert advice is sought on health and safety. The Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding folder is emerging as an example of good practice.

#### Judgements

Progress since the last inspection:

- Improve leadership and management at all levels, including the governing body, through better monitoring, evaluation and planning – *satisfactory*
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are fully met as a matter of urgency – *satisfactory*.

#### External support

The local authority has provided experienced headteacher cover and has supported the school governors in appointing a new headteacher. Its statement of action links well to the school's own action plan. Its support for the school is satisfactory.