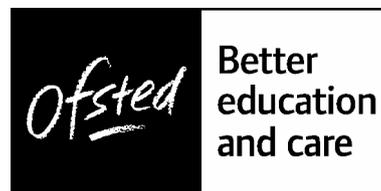


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13 December 2006

Mrs C Lancey  
The Headteacher  
West Huntspill Community Primary School  
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TA9 3QE

Dear Mrs Lancey

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WEST HUNTSPILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Introduction

Following my visit with Peter Kemble, Additional Inspector, to your school on 30 November and 1 December 2006, 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 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

Inspectors observed 12 parts of lessons and scrutinised the work of pupils from the Reception to Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. They visited the resource base, and observed an assembly and lunchtime in the dining hall. They met with the school council and spoke with parents. Meetings were held with the headteacher, chair of governors and a representative of the local authority.

### Context

Since the start of this school year, the deputy headteacher has been seconded as acting headteacher to another school. One other teacher has

left. The Year 5 and 6 class is currently taught by a teacher on a one term contract. The school is presently seeking to appoint a teacher for the next two terms for this class. The resource base has a temporary manager and action is being taken to appoint a permanent manager. Other teachers have changed classes. The only age group that has not had a change of teacher is Reception and Year 1. There are also a number of new governors. The chair took over responsibility six days prior to this inspection.

Many improvements have been made to the school's accommodation since the last monitoring inspection.

### Achievement and standards

In the national assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2006, there was a sharp fall in the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age. Few pupils reached the higher level in reading and no pupil did so in writing or mathematics. The results of pupils at the end of Year 6 showed some improvement in English and mathematics, but the number of pupils reaching the expected level in science dropped.

Throughout the school, in the lessons observed, and in pupils' books, standards are below the levels expected. In Year 2, standards are significantly lower than they should be. Present standards in Year 6 do not show an improving trend or reflect the better results of 2006.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception. Most pupils make reasonable progress in Year 1 although the challenge for the more capable pupils is inconsistent. In Year 2 progress declines and there is significant underachievement. Progress through Years 3 to 6 remains patchy and inadequate overall. Not only is there a legacy of underachievement from the past, but too many pupils are making unsatisfactory progress now in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils are making good progress in art and design lessons.

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

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science – inadequate..

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils continue to behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. There has been a good improvement in the attendance rate, which was above the national average last school year. Pupils are courteous and polite. They get on well with the adults in school and with each other. They are thoughtful and considerate towards others, for example taking care of their friends when they are unwell.

Pupils enjoy school and particularly appreciate the rewards that encourage their effort such as certificates and 'Golden Time', when they are able to choose activities for themselves. They are keen to take responsibility, such as preparing the hall for assemblies or taking on the role of school council members.

Pupils' understanding of how to keep fit and healthy, for example through diet and regular exercise, is satisfactory. Pupils know the importance of following safe practices, such as moving sensibly about the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral and social development is stronger than spiritual and cultural development. There are still few opportunities for pupils to gain spiritual and cultural understanding through their work across the subjects. Nevertheless, work in art and design is making an increasing contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness.

In some lessons pupils' desire to learn, and the good levels of concentration and effort, help pupils to make progress even when the teaching is not particularly motivating.

#### Quality of provision

The rate of improvement in teaching has slowed since the last monitoring inspection. Teaching is still too patchy and is inadequate overall. This is of particular concern given that pupils need to be taught well to compensate for their lack of progress over time.

There are some examples of good teaching in which there is a clear focus on what pupils need to learn. In an English lesson in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils were engaged well through focused discussion. Each activity built well on the previous one, providing good preparation for story writing.

Too much teaching is barely adequate and even unsatisfactory. Pupils' recorded work shows that many of them have not had their needs met this term. In the Reception and Year 1, teaching ensures pupils make satisfactory progress overall although expectations of the more capable ones are not high enough. There are also occasions when teaching supports only one of the two year groups in this class. In Years 2 to 6, the picture is mixed. Expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining in all these years are not high enough and they are inconsistent in some. Work is often at a particularly low level in Year 2. In this year, much work is poorly matched to pupils' needs and underachievement is particularly widespread.

Insufficient use is made of assessment information to match teaching to pupils' needs. The exception to this is the satisfactory support in most lessons

for pupils with learning difficulties. Teaching assistants play a good part in supporting the progress of these pupils in mainstream lessons and in the resource base.

Marking is inconsistent. There is some conscientious and helpful marking in the Reception and Year 1 class and also in the combined Year 3 and 4 class. This marking helps pupils to know what they have done well and how they can improve their work. In other classes, marking is weak.

The curriculum is not yet well enough matched to pupils' needs and interests. Learning opportunities continue to lack challenge for the more capable pupils in particular.

Enrichment of the curriculum through visits and visitors who bring their talents into school has started to improve. The headteacher is working hard to increase the range of opportunities available to pupils. For example, 50% of pupils now have violin lessons and there are 'special weeks' such as a forthcoming creativity week. Pupils appreciate the changes that have been made, such as the increased opportunities for art and sport.

The care for pupils' personal welfare is satisfactory. Pupils know that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. Staff are very considerate of pupils' feelings and personal needs. Much is done to ensure that school is a safe place and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure. The school receives good support from the local authority and other agencies for child protection. Academic guidance remains inadequate.

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

- ensure that the teaching and curriculum provision meet the needs of all pupils – inadequate
- make full use of the information gained from checking pupils' progress to improve planning and provide challenging work in lessons – inadequate.

## Leadership and management

The headteacher continues to work with determination to improve the school. Her evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision in each class is accurate. For example, in the week prior to the inspection the headteacher carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work to analyse the impact of teaching in each class. The headteacher's views of the effectiveness of teaching as shown from the work in pupils' books closely match those of inspectors.

The headteacher recognises that the monitoring of teaching needs to be intensified. She also knows that there needs to be a sharper focus on improving teaching in each class as well as on the areas of practice that all teachers need to develop.

As at the last monitoring inspection, the headteacher has had to expend considerable time and energy in managing staff changes. Her range of responsibilities for subject leadership is unusually extensive. Without a deputy, she is currently managing the day by day running of the school and working resolutely, but alone, to move the school forward through special measures.

A major weakness restricting the school's capacity to improve further is that teachers do not sufficiently share the responsibility for leading the school out of special measures. They do not play a sufficient part in objective self-evaluation or in accounting for the quality of provision and pupils' standards in their classes. This weakness, together with the headteacher's excessive workload, has resulted in the pace of improvement slipping and having been inadequate since the last monitoring inspection.

Governance is developing satisfactorily. The governing body is becoming more organised in terms of its committees and systems. The chair recognises the importance of effective governance in reducing some of the burden on the headteacher.

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

- improve systems and procedures for evaluating how well the school is performing – inadequate.

### External support

The local authority is providing satisfactory support to improve the teaching, for example through literacy, numeracy and early years staff working with teachers. It recognises that the school is not on track to be removed from special measures by the target date it set of spring 2007. It also knows that the support needs to be adjusted to meet the school's present needs, to accelerate progress in improving teaching in particular, and to relieve some of the burden on the headteacher.

### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to the local authority contributing significantly to the support provided.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of teaching, in particular teachers' expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining and the match of teaching to pupils' needs.
- Ensure that all teachers recognise that they are responsible for the quality of provision and the standards attained by the pupils in their classes.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children and Young People for Somerset.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger  
Additional Inspector