

PROTECT-INSPECTION

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19 November 2010

Mr Paul Sockett
Headteacher
Bridstow CE (Aided) Primary School
Bridstow
Ross-on-Wye
HR9 6PZ

Dear Mr Sockett

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bridstow Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Thursday 18 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils and teachers observed during lessons, as well as the staff and parents spoken to during the visit. I would also like to thank the representatives of the local authority who, at short notice, deferred a review of the school's work as it was originally planned to take place on the same day as this visit. The central record of suitability checks on staff was scrutinised and it meets the current government requirements.

Staffing has been stable since the last inspection, as only one class teacher joined the school to replace a teacher who left.

As a result of the inspection on 26 February 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The small numbers of pupils taking national tests or being assessed by teachers each year affect comparisons with national averages. However, attainment is broadly average and improving, and the pace of learning in English and mathematics remains satisfactory. Some good teaching is accelerating the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and more able pupils in Years 5 and 6. Despite these improvements, the demands placed on pupils and the pace of learning in lessons are uneven as some pupils just fall short of their expected learning targets. Teachers now provide targets for pupils to work towards, although their progress and performance are not being checked regularly enough to ensure that they all

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reach these targets. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and provide good pointers for improvement towards the next steps in their learning. However, marking does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to assess and compare their progress with their targets. Teachers and support staff have stepped up assessment activities during lessons, with the best teaching including opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning. This was seen to very good effect in an English lesson where pupils in Years 5 and 6 generated ideas and shared these with others to successfully explore, create and edit free verse poetry.

The school has maintained a supportive climate for learning that is reflected in the warm and positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils, views that also correspond with those expressed by parents and carers. Pupils are eager to learn and are encouraged to cooperate, share their thoughts or work independently. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants effectively support those pupils who find learning particularly challenging. However, too much over-direction in some lessons, or tasks that do not expect enough of pupils, slow the pace of learning.

Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the church and local community but until now, have had less experience and understanding of the diversity of communities beyond the local area. The governing body has reviewed its duty to promote community cohesion and implemented a policy which has led to improvements. As a result, the school has extended the scope of work pupils do beyond their immediate locality. The curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to broaden their learning through a range of topics, visits and visitors, like the recent visit of a member of the clergy from Gambia. Since the last inspection the headteacher has utilised its partnership with a local secondary school to forge international links with a primary school in Uganda. In addition, the staff have set up a partnership with an inner city primary school to broaden pupils' knowledge of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in Britain.

The local authority's advisory team and school improvement partner have provided satisfactory support. Systematic reviews have helped to steer the school towards more consistent improvements to pupils' learning and progress. This, together with coordinated staff training, have helped to increase the school's capacity for sustained improvement as the staff take on more responsibility for evaluating each other's performance towards raising pupils' attainment.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2009.

- Increase the challenge provided in lessons to improve the progress more able pupils are making, particularly in mathematics.
- Make sure that staff are clear about the next steps in learning for individual pupils in English and mathematics and see that these steps are consistently and closely used to plan lessons.
- Ensure that requirements are met for the school to actively promote community cohesion.