

Serco Inspections  
Cedar House  
21 William Street  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 1LH

**Ofsted**  
T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Serco**  
Direct T 0121 683 3888



23 June 2011

Mr G Gentle  
Headteacher  
Bilston Church of England Primary School  
Albany Crescent  
Bilston  
WV14 0HU

Dear Mr Gentle

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bilston Church of England Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 June 2011, 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 Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils and your school improvement partner.

Since the last inspection one new full-time teacher and three part-time teachers have been appointed and two teachers have left the school. There is currently one newly qualified teacher working in the school. Three new teaching assistants have been appointed. The school is now housed in renovated accommodation which has been designed to better enhance teaching and learning needs. A higher percentage of boys are entering the school.

As a result of the inspection on 25 January 2010 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 good progress in making improvements and outstanding progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has greatly improved in all subjects and is line with national averages. Girls' attainment is not as high as boys, but is improving. This is because the school has put in place a number of strategies to match work more closely to learners' needs. Improvements in target setting and teaching have led to outstanding improvements in mathematics and good improvement in English. All pupils now make good progress overall. The school has a rigorous tracking system in place and this indicates that pupils in Year 6 should reach their targets.



The school has worked assiduously to improve opportunities for pupils to write regularly across the curriculum. Teachers carefully monitor and track pupils' writing in all subjects. Plenty of opportunities are provided in order to encourage pupils to build and develop their writing skills. Every class has clear, challenging targets for cross-curricular work in literacy and mathematics. All targets are layered to challenge higher, middle and lower attaining pupils to ensure that work is well matched to their needs. These targets are clearly reflected in teachers' planning. Both staff and pupils understand what they have to do to achieve them. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and plan with teachers to ensure that pupils working in small groups are well supported. Pupils have benefited from the 'Every Child Counts' programme which is led by a specially trained teacher. Every class now has an attached teaching assistant who knows the pupils well. In addition, dedicated teaching assistants who specifically support speech and language and pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Teaching is good overall. In the vast majority of lessons all pupils make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully question pupils to probe their understanding and quickly address any misunderstandings about their work. Teachers use the spacious newly refurbished classrooms to make interesting places for pupils to learn in a calm atmosphere. Every classroom has an interactive whiteboard at pupil height which allows them to demonstrate their thinking and working out and share it with the whole class. Teachers use the whiteboards well to make learning more interesting. Laptops are used effectively to help pupils improve their writing and research work. Activities in lessons are well chosen to engage pupils' interest and enjoyment and to meet their learning needs. Success criteria are regularly shared with pupils in lessons. On occasion, pupils construct their own success criteria and this enables them to have a very good understanding of how to improve their work. Feedback to pupils in lessons reinforces what they have done well and what they need to do next. Marking in books is consistent and explains the next steps in pupils' learning. In most cases teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to correct their work.

Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils are friendly and very welcoming. Pupils reported that bullying was very rare and speedily dealt with. Pupils respect each other and enjoy helping one another and the staff. The school has recognised that attendance has remained low for too long. A range of robust and rigorous strategies have been put in place and these are becoming increasingly successful. Unfortunately, the influenza outbreak before Christmas adversely affected attendance figures. In some classes, only a third of pupils were in attendance at any one time over a three-week period.

Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, leaders and managers at all levels are working resolutely to improve teaching and learning. This work has been effectively supported through carefully planned professional development, particularly from the local authority. As a result, the relatively inexperienced teaching staff have been eager to embrace change and develop their understanding of

teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning and teachers use of assessment information and data have improved. This information is used effectively to plan lessons and work that is matched well to learners' needs. The school has a thorough and detailed cycle of lesson observations in place. This coupled with monitoring and tracking of class and pupil data ensures that carefully targeted interventions are put in place to promote good learning. All new initiatives are rigorously monitored and evaluated to ensure they are consistently used by all staff and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. As a result, learning in the classroom has been transformed. Senior leaders, middle managers and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this has greatly improved the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Michelle Parker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2010**

- Raise standards in all subjects across the school by using assessment information more effectively to:
  - match activities accurately to pupils' abilities
  - identify, within lessons, when pupils are ready for the next steps in their learning
  - respond to pupils' work and inform them of the actions they need to take to improve and achieve their learning targets.
  
- Raise standards in writing by creating more opportunities to use writing skills consistently across the curriculum.
  
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation procedures are more effective by:
  - regularly evaluating the impact of new initiatives on pupils' learning
  - ensuring that they are implemented by all staff.