

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol BS2 8RR

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

Direct T 0117 3115319  
Direct F 0117 3150430  
Direct email: matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com

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Helen D'cruz  
Headteacher  
Dover, St Mary's Church of England Primary School  
Laureston Place  
Dover  
Kent  
CT16 1QX

Dear Mrs D'cruz

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour:  
monitoring inspection of Dover, St Mary's Church of England Primary  
School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 October 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 13–14 May 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:

- inadequate progress in making improvements
- inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement
- and the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is good.

Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English has increased and is now above the national average. In particular, there are increasing numbers of pupils joining the school in Year 1 who are new to the country and who have not had previous school experience. The school is seeking to support these pupils more effectively and has recently appointed a teaching assistant who speaks the most common home languages, which are Czech and Slovak.

Good progress has been made in managing and improving pupils' behaviour. Throughout the school, there are consistent systems to manage behaviour and these are well understood by the pupils. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is



good. They are polite, friendly and attentive. A good example of their cooperation and enthusiasm was seen during the visit in the singing assembly.

Strategies to improve attendance, particularly the attendance of pupils who regularly take time off school, have been successful. Overall attendance improved last year from below average to around the national average. This trend has been maintained in the current year. The number of pupils whose attendance causes concern has reduced and the attendance of some of these pupils has significantly improved.

The area of major weakness remains the achievement of pupils. Although attainment in English and mathematics rose slightly in the 2011 national assessments, it did so from a very low level and remains significantly below average at both Key Stages 1 and 2. The progress made by pupils over several years also continues to be significantly below average. Last year, only 72% of the Year 6 class made the expected progress from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1 in English and 67% in mathematics. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 last year was better than in Key Stage 2 and this is confirmed by the school's own detailed assessment and tracking information. This information also shows that progress is inconsistent throughout Key Stage 2, which leaves too much to do in the final year to make up the shortfall. The learning and progress seen in lessons during the visit varied but was generally satisfactory. However, the quality and quantity of work in the lessons and in the pupils' books since September are not sufficient to ensure that pupils make the rapid progress needed to raise levels of attainment and make up for slower progress in the past. There are inconsistencies in the opportunities provided for pupils who are in the same year group but in different classes.

There are, however, some positive signs. Relationships are warm and pupils respond well. Teachers plan well-ordered lessons, with a reasonable balance between teacher-led and independent working. However, the expectations of how much and at what level pupils should be achieving are too low. Lessons have clear learning objectives and there is developing use of success criteria to show pupils what the learning during the lesson should look like. A good example of this was seen in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class, where the teacher made good use of success criteria to help the pupils evaluate how well one pupil's four-wheeled junk model met the objectives.

Teachers mark the pupils' books conscientiously and their written comments generally let pupils know how well they have done. The best practice is still at a developmental stage and not consistent across all classes, but there are examples where pupils are given helpful guidance as to the next steps and, in a few cases, there are examples of pupils responding to the marking. There are opportunities in some lessons for pupils to review their learning, such as that seen during the visit in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils were using the features of writing a recount to evaluate the work of others. There are also examples of where teachers pick up on areas of confusion and adapt the lesson to provide support. Lessons are planned

with activities and additional support to meet the different needs of pupils. However, the match of activity to ability is not quite right. In most of the lessons visited, the work was not challenging enough to extend the learning, particularly of the more able pupils. For example, in several classes, all of the pupils were doing the same activities and there were times when pupils completed the work and either had to wait for the others to catch up or were given something to fill the time rather than an extension activity. As a result, the pace of their learning slowed.

Local Authority colleagues have enhanced the monitoring and evaluation processes and the school benefits from partnerships with other local schools. School leaders clearly know and care for every child. They analyse the assessment information effectively to identify those pupils who are not making sufficient progress. Small group, one-to-one and catch-up activities are in place and helping some pupils to make better progress. Despite this, and the improvements in behaviour and attendance, the school has not tackled the weaknesses in achievement and quality of teaching with sufficient urgency so the pace of improvement is too slow.

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

Sheena MacDonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

Implement the plans to improve the consistency of teaching and pupils' learning and progress by:

- refining the work given to groups of pupils to make sure that it challenges them appropriately
- giving pupils opportunities to improve their work by responding to teachers' feedback
- increasing the pace of lessons by engaging pupils more actively with practical activities
- ensuring that behaviour management strategies are applied rigorously.

Improve the attendance of the few pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly.