

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

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**

24 November 2011

Mrs E Tayler  
Headteacher  
Cottingham Church of England School  
Berryfield Road  
Cottingham  
Market Harborough  
LE16 8XB

Dear Mrs Tayler

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Cottingham Church of England School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 and 23 November 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

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 the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment in writing, mathematics and science across the school by ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan learning that matches pupils' different abilities, especially in providing challenge for more-able pupils.
- Raise the quality of teaching to at least satisfactory by ensuring teachers:
  - identify precise learning objectives and success criteria and share these with pupils so that they and their parents know clearly how well they are doing and how to improve
  - adjust teaching methods and curriculum activities so that they systematically build pupils' learning and skills.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of subject leadership and the Early Years Foundation Stage so that rigorous checks of pupils' achievement and progress lead to actions that result in improvements to teaching and the curriculum.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Cottingham Church of England School**

### **Report from third monitoring inspection on 22–23 November 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

One teacher left at the end of the summer term and has been replaced temporarily.

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

Provisional results of Year 6 pupils in 2011 national tests improved on those of 2010. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 was broadly average but fewer than average reached Level 5, especially in English. Year 6 pupils did not make as much progress as expected from Year 2, particularly more-able pupils in English. However, the school's assessment information shows that they made satisfactory progress from the end of Year 5. Year 2 pupils' attainment improved on 2010. It was above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. The school's assessment information indicates that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage made good progress to reach standards that are generally above those achieved nationally. In other year groups, pupils made variable progress, often slower in reading and mathematics, and linked to continuing variation in the quality of teaching. The headteacher has identified issues with boys' writing, and approaches to reading and handwriting, which are now priorities for action this year.

The headteacher has successfully introduced a new system for tracking pupils' progress which enables regular monitoring of the performance of individuals and groups. This allows staff to identify promptly pupils who are at risk of not meeting their targets. Teachers also review pupils' work and record progress on tracking sheets in English, mathematics and science books. They are beginning to use this information more effectively to inform their planning of learning.

In lessons, pupils settle to work promptly and most work well in pairs and small groups. However, a few find listening difficult and, as a result, are not always clear what they should be doing or do not follow discussions closely enough. Pupils vary in their confidence when answering teachers' questions. Some are fluent orally and readily expand on their ideas while others struggle to express brief factual answers. This affects levels of participation by pupils in some classes.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise attainment in writing, mathematics and science across the school – satisfactory.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils are positive about the school and say that they feel safe. Most behave well in lessons and around the school, showing respect for each other. Pupils' attendance was above average in 2010-11 and, this term, it is high at 97%. Older pupils take responsibility willingly and understand that they should help others and provide models for good behaviour and relationships. They assist with assemblies and act as playground 'buddies'.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Teaching is improving. A higher proportion of good teaching was seen on this visit but the majority is satisfactory. As a result, pupils still do not make the consistently good progress required for them to reach their targets. Teachers now plan learning with greater focus on their assessment of progress in earlier lessons and the levels reached by pupils. However, this is not consistent across all classes. Teachers set clear learning objectives and, in the best lessons, they ensure that pupils understand exactly what they need to do to succeed. This is increasingly expressed differently for the varying ages and levels of ability in the class.

Following on from training in the summer which was continued this term, teachers have improved their work guiding small groups of pupils within lessons. They use clearer objectives with pupils and match work better to pupils' differing abilities. Often, this includes suitable challenge for more-able pupils. This was apparent, for example, in Year 6 mathematics when pupils were asked to show that they could select and justify one of several methods for solving multiplication problems expressed in words. Teachers use a wider range of questions to check pupils' understanding but this is not consistent across classes and some teachers miss opportunities to challenge pupils to explain their answers further or to comment on the views expressed by others. As a result, some pupils are not fully involved in discussions or are not helped to extend their thinking.

The revised marking policy is now well established. Teachers make clear to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to improve using different coloured pens. Generally, teachers' comments help pupils to understand what they should do next but this is not as well developed in mathematics as it is in English. There is some variation across classes and pupils do not always follow up the comments or questions posed.

The curriculum has improved with the introduction of activities which pupils enjoy. The 'philosophy for children' programme develops the thinking and oral skills of older pupils. Regular singing practice produces high quality outcomes. Pupils value opportunities to work alongside an artist producing textile hangings for the hall and visiting a local museum to research toys and the scientific forces that are involved in their use. Staff identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities promptly and monitor them regularly through their individual plans. The programme of additional support and tuition related to their particular needs is improving.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise the quality of teaching to at least satisfactory – satisfactory.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteacher continues to set a clear vision for the school. She has developed a rigorous process to monitor performance and identifies issues accurately to inform concise and well-focused action plans. She reviews and updates these plans each term and, along with the outcomes from tracking pupils' progress, uses them to provide regular reports to the governing body. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and uses individual plans to focus teachers on areas for them to improve. Teachers now use tracking sheets to monitor pupils' progress on a regular basis and this information is transferred to the system used by the headteacher for analysing performance against targets. Although it is in its early stages, the headteacher can now more easily monitor how individuals and groups are doing. Members of the governing body have a growing understanding of the school's performance and are developing ways to visit the school and meet with staff to review its progress more directly.

Subject leaders reviewed the progress in their areas of responsibility at the end of the summer and used this information to identify priorities for the current year in relevant action plans. However, these plans still vary in quality in terms of how clear the necessary actions are, the focus of staff training and whether measurable success criteria are set. Although the subject leaders are more confident in their roles they are not fully accountable for monitoring provision, evaluating outcomes and reporting to the headteacher and governing body. The roles are better established where they overlap with senior leadership duties, such as special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- strengthen the effectiveness of subject leadership and the Early Years Foundation Stage – satisfactory.

## **External support**

The local authority continues to provide effective support for the school although the availability of staff to support teachers and subject leaders has reduced. Local authority staff review the school's work regularly and report to the governing body. They also identify possible action to support the school on specific priorities such as the effectiveness of questioning. Cottingham benefits from a partnership with a successful local school. This has enabled teachers to visit to see effective practice and to meet other staff to discuss planning and approaches to learning. The headteachers also work together to share effective practice.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Strengthen the role of subject leaders so that they monitor provision closely to provide evidence of improvements and report to the headteacher and governing body.