

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
BRISTOL
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0845 123 6001
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Direct email:
rebecca.jackson@tribalgroup.com



2 March 2012

Mrs A Cebunka
Headteacher
St Matthew's High Brooms Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Powder Mill Lane
High Brooms
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN4 9DY

Dear Mrs Cebunka

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour:
monitoring inspection of St Matthew's High Brooms Church of England
Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 March 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Could you also please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff and governor who gave so freely of their time.

Since the school was last inspected it has grown in size and there are now approximately 30 more pupils on roll. Pupil mobility remains above average although it has improved. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals remains above average as does the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is just below the national average. There have been few significant staffing changes. The school now has a new building that provides an extra classroom and has allowed the catering facilities to be moved on site improving lunchtime arrangements.

As a result of the inspection on 4 and 5 November 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is good.



Achievement of pupils at the school

Since the last inspection, pupils' writing has improved. Standards remain below those found nationally but pupils are now making better progress from their very low starting points. This has been helped by the greater opportunities provided for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects and to engage in a range of writing activities for different purposes. Better support and specialist intervention for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, especially those on the 'school action' level, are improving their progress.

Standards in Key Stage 1 now show an improving trend, most noticeably in writing and mathematics. Standards in writing are close to those expected for pupils' ages. In these classes, teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are higher and more challenging. Standards in Key Stage 2 are low and the gap with national outcomes widened in 2011 with mathematics showing the greatest decline followed by reading. However, the number of pupils reaching Level 4 and above in both English and mathematics did improve over previous years and they are making better progress. This improvement is expected to continue in 2012. The progress made by Year 6 pupils in 2011 in English was in line with that made by all pupils nationally. This was largely due to the good progress in writing as this was better than that found nationally. However, progress in reading was not as good and below national levels especially for middle-ability pupils. Progress in mathematics was not as good and standards fell in 2011. The school is working hard to address these issues and information on current performance shows improving outcomes.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and learning is improving as teachers have a sharper focus on learning outcomes. A more rigorous and systematic approach to the teaching of letters and sounds has an impact on improving literacy skills. Some teachers use questioning very well to probe pupils' understanding and set particular challenges for individual and groups. Occasionally, the tasks set for some groups are undemanding and the pace of learning slows where pupils are not sure what they are supposed to be doing.

Teachers' assessment, marking and target-setting strategies continue to improve as they become embedded in everyday practice. Teachers make much better use of the outcomes of assessment to plan for future lessons and give pupils good advice on how to improve their work. Performance is more closely tracked and the staff are more skilled in using this information to identify underachievement and intervene quickly with appropriate support.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Improved support for teachers with managing behaviour for learning impacts positively on improving pupils' progress. Behaviour management strategies are much



clearer and pupils have a good understanding of the process and know how their teachers expect them to behave. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and learn a lot. In the lessons observed during this visit, pupils mostly behaved well. They were dressed as characters from their favourite books [for World Book Day] and were excited participants in the range of extra literacy activities organised for this special day. They really enjoyed seeing their teachers in character as well. Relationships are good and pupils get on well together as the school works hard to promote their moral and social development. Where behaviour was not as good, pupils were not clear about their tasks and were too easily distracted.

The school has put in place rigorous absence management strategies to address the issue of pupils who are persistently absent raised by the previous inspection. As a result, attendance is improving and is now in line with national levels. There are still a few pupils who do not come to school as often as they should.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

In responding to the issues raised in the previous inspection, the school leadership has effectively prioritised the monitoring of pupils' performance and strengthened the role of target setting in raising achievement. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has highlighted the areas for improvement that have a direct impact on raising achievement. The impact of this work is illustrated by the improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes in Key Stage 1.

The pace of improvement in current pupils' learning and attainment is starting to speed up although there is still much work to be done in reading and mathematics. The capacity of the school to maintain this improvement is demonstrated by the faster progress being made by disabled students and those with special educational needs, and in all pupils' writing skills. Developments to the curriculum promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development and improve their understanding of other cultures, religions and beliefs. The school has not made any links with schools and communities within the United Kingdom and internationally.

The governing body is now more skilled in analysing information on pupils' performance and has a clearer view of achievement. Representatives from the local authority have given the school effective support both directly and through arranging input by external consultants. This support has been useful in helping the school to respond to the inspection issues.

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

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2010

- Increase the rate at which pupils develop their writing skills, ensuring that they have more frequent opportunities to write at length, for different purposes and across a range of subjects.
- Ensure that teachers, particularly in Years 1 and 2, have consistently high expectations of pupils' learning and progress, particularly of those who are more able, and that better use is made of individual learning targets to increase the pace of progress.
- Seek, in cooperation with parents and carers, to resolve the issues around the low attendance of a small group of persistently absent pupils.
- Improve community cohesion by:
 - developing meaningful links with schools and communities within the United Kingdom and internationally
 - further extending pupils' knowledge of cultures, religions and beliefs other than their own.