

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 311 5359  
**Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

12 May 2014

Mrs Sarah Murphy-Dutton  
Headteacher  
St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School  
Wexham Road  
Slough  
SL2 5QR

Dear Sarah

**Special measures monitoring inspection of St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit with Veronica Young, additional inspector, to your school on 8 and 9 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2013. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint two newly qualified teachers (NQTs) before the next monitoring inspection. These NQTs must not be appointed to work in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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, the Director of Children's Services for Slough and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2013.**

- Increase the amount of good or better teaching and eliminate inadequate teaching by ensuring that teachers:
  - provide clear guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve
  - expect more of pupils, especially the more able, for example through probing questions
  - give pupils work that is well matched to their ability
  - observe and learn from the good practice that exists in some classes and in other schools
  - use time effectively in all lessons to allow pupils to apply the skills they have been taught.
- Improve progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
  - there are frequent opportunities for pupils to write at greater length and improve their writing skills across a range of subjects
  - pupils use and apply their mathematics skills solving day-to-day problems
  - leaders keep a close check on pupils' progress and take action where there are gaps between the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - fully implementing an improvement plan that focuses sharply on improving teaching and achievement and clearly identifies measures of success
  - ensuring performance management is used effectively to bring about improvements in teaching
  - providing an effective whole-school approach to checking teaching and learning and making sure all school leaders have the necessary skills to do this
  - ensuring all senior leaders contribute effectively to achieving improvements.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 May 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, groups of pupils, members of the interim executive board (IEB), a senior leader from a school providing support, and a representative from the local authority. During this visit, inspectors focused on the quality of teaching and improvements in leadership capacity.

### **Context**

There have been many changes since the last visit. The deputy headteacher, Early Years Foundation Stage leader and one other teacher have all left the school. One teacher has left her teaching post to become an Early Years practitioner within the school. There are two temporary teachers and one new permanent teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage, one of whom is a consultant teacher employed to lead improvements in Reception. There are two further temporary teachers; one in Year 3 and one in Year 4.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Standards of attainment are rising. The current Year 6 are on track to exceed floor standards and reach higher levels of attainment than last year's Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. More pupils are on track to reach the higher levels than in the past. The quality of some writing, for example, in Year 6, is impressive.

In Year 2, pupils are on track to reach broadly average standards of attainment. Most pupils at Key Stage 1 are learning to read and write more effectively as a result of better teaching and a systematic approach to learning the sounds that letters make.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are beginning to catch up. Their attitude to working and playing together is much improved and this puts them in a much stronger position to be ready for when they begin Year 1. They are catching up in reading and writing, although some still have some way to go before they catch up completely.

As a result of better teaching, increasing numbers of pupils throughout the school are making faster progress than they have done in the past. There is little doubt that this is an improving school, although the improvement is uneven across year groups and classes.

## **The quality of teaching**

There is little doubt that teaching is improving and endemic weaknesses are being overcome. While the impact of teaching overall remains too variable, there is much more now that is good and, as a result, many pupils are making accelerated progress. The quality of teaching in Reception class is improving, along with the quality and appropriateness of the curriculum. As a result, children are learning the skills that they need to thrive in Year 1; they are much more settled and complete tasks more willingly. These children still have ground to make up, but teachers are much clearer about what they are trying to achieve and children are getting much better at responding to instructions, playing together and completing tasks.

While teaching is improving, there remains too much which requires improvement. The impact of teaching assistants remains too inconsistent. While some additional adults provide useful help and support to pupils, others get in the way of learning, because they guide children to the correct answers without helping them understand what it is they are learning about. Where this is the case, some pupils become over-reliant on help and, as a result, produce poorer-quality work.

Some teachers are yet to make their marking and feedback helpful. Again, this is in sharp contrast to some that is found in the school; the best of which provides very clear help to pupils in improving their work. Through this effective marking, teachers make clear their high expectations and pupils dutifully respond. Weaker marking provides much less encouragement and guidance. In some cases, marking shows that some teachers have gaps in their own knowledge about grammar and punctuation. Where this is the case, some pupils are given poor guidance which does nothing to help them become more effective writers.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour is good. The behaviour of children in Reception class has improved considerably. They are now much more aware of how to respect their peers and their equipment. These children are learning routines and expectations for more formal learning sessions that will serve them well as they move towards Year 1.

Pupils around the school are generally well behaved. They enjoy school and work hard for their teachers. Pupils are respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils appreciate many of the changes in the school. They say that behaviour has improved and that they feel safe. Pupils say that teachers are fair with them and deal with any problems quickly.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The leadership team is smaller than at the last visit and there are appropriate plans to appoint new leaders to key positions in readiness for the next academic year. The

headteacher and interim executive board have a secure understanding of the strengths that exist within the leadership team and the areas of the school where leadership remains underdeveloped, such as for special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Suitable interim arrangements are in place to ensure these aspects of the school are not neglected. The headteacher and assistant headteachers continue to make an effective team, raising expectations and improving the quality of teaching in their respective areas of responsibility. They have sensibly focused on encouraging teachers to think more about the impact they have as teachers rather than slavishly following a prescribed methodology. This, along with clear guidance about expectations, is leading to more effective teaching and improved progress. Information about pupils' progress is being used more effectively to hold teachers to account and identify where pupils need additional support or challenge. There is little doubt that teachers increasingly recognise that they are held to account for the difference they make much more than the things they do.

The temporary leadership in Early Years Foundation Stage has made a good start at improving this provision. There is still some way to go in ensuring all adults help children to make good progress, but it is much improved. It will be essential that this improvement continues and permanent and effective leadership for this aspect of the school is secured.

The IEB continue to provide a high level of challenge and support. The skills and experience of this board are impressive with successful people from the world of education and beyond. They now act much more decisively to deal with inadequacies and hold leaders to account for improvements to teaching that requires improvement. There are no solid plans to replace the IEB with a governing body and, at the next visit, inspectors will want to understand how the IEB intends to manage a smooth transition towards long-term governance arrangements.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to provide leaders with training and guidance on the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. Leaders are particularly praiseworthy of the work done by the local authority adviser, who has acted as their coach and mentor in their new roles.

The school has forged links with Upton Court Grammar School and this has proved useful in helping teachers become more reflective about the impact of their teaching. Several teachers spoke very positively about the work they have done alongside teachers from this school, observing and discussing teaching and learning together.