

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 0117 311 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

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Mr Ivan Mullinder
Headteacher
St Anne's Catholic Primary School
Washington Road
Caversham
Reading
RG4 5AA

Dear Mr Mullinder

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Louise Adams, seconded inspector, and David Shears, additional inspector, to your school on 24 and 25 June 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose. At present, the plan does not set out how the local authority will support the school during the next academic year, until the school is removed from special measures. In addition, it is still unclear how the local authority will ensure that parents and carers are to be kept informed, or how their views are to be taken into consideration.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 Interim Executive Board, the Director of the Diocesan Education Service and the Director of Children's Services for Reading.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the skills to accurately assess pupils' attainment
 - raising expectations about what all pupils, particularly those who are more able, can achieve and set tasks appropriate for their needs
 - ensuring the pace of learning in all lessons is appropriate to ensure good progress for all pupils
 - ensuring that teaching, together with additional support, enables those with special educational needs to make good progress.
- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum
 - ensuring the writing policy is consistently applied in all classes.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, to secure and sustain improvements by ensuring that:
 - procedures relating to safeguarding are urgently, consistently implemented
 - there is clear succession planning for the senior leadership of the school
 - weaknesses in teaching are eliminated rapidly, performance management is linked to achievement and checks made on the quality of teaching are robust
 - staff are given opportunities to develop their skills through a planned programme of professional development
 - rapid action is taken to monitor the progress of those who are eligible for the pupil premium to ensure that gaps are closing
 - the leadership of special educational needs is developed within the school
 - the governing body robustly holds the school to account and ensures financial probity.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 June 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the teaching and learning coordinator, the special educational needs coordinator, the English and mathematics subject leaders, the lead child protection officer and four members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), including the Chair of the IEB. Her Majesty's Inspector also had a telephone conversation with the local authority officer who is supporting the school.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit, one teacher has left the school. A special educational needs coordinator has been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' achievement seen in work observed during lessons and in their books indicates that there are variations in the rates of progress for groups of pupils and for pupils across the school. The information the school gathers on the attainment and progress of pupils is becoming more accurate. Recent external checking of the validity of teachers' assessments confirms that their judgements are beginning to be generally accurate. This is helping teachers and school leaders to check on the progress of different groups of pupils. However, due to the previous inaccuracies of assessment information, it is unclear whether the gaps in attainment between those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding (this supports pupils in local authority care, and those known to be eligible for free school meals, in order to increase their rates of progress) and others are narrowing. Across the school, writing is still much weaker than reading and mathematics. The school's English policy, which includes the policy on writing, is out of date and requires significant revision to ensure that opportunities for pupils to write more widely in English and in other subjects are provided. Currently, in Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in writing is below the national average.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is beginning to show signs of improvement. The proportion of inadequate teaching has been reduced. But weaknesses in teaching remain. A significant proportion of teaching requires improvement to enable pupils to make better progress in lessons. Where teaching is more effective, pupils make better progress because teachers have high expectations, use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking and develop their understanding, pinpointing misunderstandings and reshaping tasks to enable pupils to make good progress. In these lessons, teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and use effective

strategies to assess pupils' learning throughout the lesson. However, not all teachers plan work to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils well enough. In some lessons, pupils of all abilities work at the same tasks. As a result, more-able pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge and lower-achieving pupils find the work too difficult, limiting their progress. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning during lessons is underdeveloped. Some teachers are not skilled enough at checking on pupils' knowledge and understanding during lessons to adjust tasks, and move pupils' learning on at a more rapid pace.

The marking policy has been revised, but at present it is not being consistently implemented by all teachers. As a result, the quality of marking and feedback to pupils is variable. Some teachers are not marking work regularly enough, and in some cases, even when work is marked, the feedback provided to pupils does not help them to know how to improve their work. In the best examples, teachers provide useful comment to pupils to let them know where they have been successful, with additional comments to enable them to know how to improve their work. It is important that all teachers consistently provide effective feedback to pupils and ensure that sufficient time is allocated to enable pupils to show improvements in their work.

The use of targets to support pupils' learning is also inconsistent. Although most pupils have some understanding of their targets, teachers are not using them well enough to check on pupils' learning. Teachers need to monitor pupils' progress towards achieving their targets more regularly and ensure pupils know what they need to include in their work to achieve the next level of attainment.

The quality of teaching assistant support is variable. In some lessons, pupils are provided with over-intensive support from teaching assistants that reduces their ability to develop their own learning. However, some teaching assistants work well to support pupils with particular needs to enable them to access learning tasks and be successful in their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to learning are mainly positive; they are polite and enjoy good relationships with one another and with adults. The behaviour policy has been updated and, in the main, the way the policy is implemented is consistent. Pupils say behaviour has improved. They are keen to learn, which is evident from the improved attendance rates this year. Pupils' behaviour observed in lessons and around the school during the inspection was generally sensible and calm.

Although pupils say they feel safe, they are aware that some bullying exists. They know that adults deal with inappropriate behaviour immediately, but they are also aware that different forms of bullying have not been eliminated. The current anti-

bullying policy needs updating to ensure that all forms of bullying are dealt with effectively.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders and members of the IEB have taken swift action to address the safeguarding concerns raised at the previous monitoring visit. The single central record has been updated and essential information is now included on the record. All staff have received appropriate, up-to-date training on safeguarding and there are a suitable number of senior staff who have completed safeguarding training at a higher level. Members of the IEB have also received up-to-date safeguarding training. Statutory safeguarding policies have been reviewed and updated in line with current statutory guidance.

The IEB has worked hard to reduce the budget deficit. Plans are underway to further reduce the overspend during the next academic year. Records of the spending of pupil premium funding during the last financial year are being evaluated. This important information, once completed, needs to be available on the school website to meet statutory requirements. The current pupil premium budget is being carefully allocated to ensure pupils eligible for this funding are supported well, in order to increase their rates of progress and enable their achievement to be in line with other pupils.

The IEB has secured a substantive executive headteacher to take up post in September 2014. This, together with the new special educational needs coordinator, and the teaching and learning coordinator, has strengthened the leadership capacity of the school in order to drive improvement.

The school improvement plan has been amended and is more closely linked to checking on pupils' achievement. However, it is still unclear how the plan is to be monitored and what evidence will be required to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

The special educational needs coordinator is working effectively to put suitable programmes in place to support pupils with special educational needs. Plans are in place to ensure teaching assistant support is suitably targeted to the particular needs of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs.

The teaching and learning coordinator is supporting improvements in the quality of teaching through coaching and mentoring activities. Assessment systems are more secure and teachers are developing a better understanding of the progress pupils are making over time. Regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress are helping teachers to plan programmes of support for particular pupils. Performance management systems have been put in place to evaluate the quality of teaching and hold teachers more accountable for the progress of the pupils. Senior leaders are

observing lessons and providing useful feedback to teachers on how to improve their teaching. It is essential that senior leaders take into account a wider range of indicators to judge the quality of teaching which include the quality of planning, the accuracy of assessments, the quality of marking and feedback to pupils, the implementation of policies and the information the school gathers on the progress pupils are making.

The curriculum is under review. It is important that senior leaders provide suitable guidance to teachers to enable sufficient time for all subjects to be appropriately planned and to provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects across the curriculum.

External support

The local authority took action to increase the effectiveness of governance, by putting in place the IEB in the spring term. It has provided significant financial support for the school since the inspection. The School Partnership Advisor makes frequent visits to provide guidance and support for senior leaders. The local authority has offered additional support for English and mathematics. It is important that senior leaders now make effective use of any available support to improve the quality of teaching and increase rates of pupils' progress.