

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

4 July 2014

Alison Hatch
Headteacher
Cranbrook Church of England Primary School
Carriers Road
Cranbrook
Kent
TN17 3JZ

Dear Miss Hatch

Special measures monitoring inspection of Cranbrook Church of England Primary School

Following my visit with Evelyn Riley, Additional inspector, to your school on 2 and 3 July 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 school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection
- the local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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 Kent, and the Diocese of Canterbury.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Eradicate inadequate teaching and improve its quality so it is at least good, to rapidly raise pupils' achievement, especially in reading and mathematics, by making sure that:
 - teachers use assessment information accurately to plan lessons that are hard enough for all groups of pupils, especially the most able, so they can achieve at the highest levels
 - teachers assess pupils' progress more effectively in lessons and then adapt work more quickly when necessary so pupils remain engaged and all behave well
 - teachers' marking always gives pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do next and pupils have time to respond to this feedback and correct their work
 - activities in the Reception class are purposeful and allow children to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics, when working on their own or with adults
 - the good practice seen in some lessons is shared more effectively among the staff.

- Improve behaviour so it is at least good by ensuring that:
 - adults who supervise playtimes and lunchtimes implement the behaviour policy more consistently so pupils' behaviour improves
 - all instances of reported bullying are followed up thoroughly and monitored closely to prevent them from reoccurring and to reassure parents and pupils.

- Develop the skills of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, by:
 - making sure that the quality of teaching is rigorously checked using information from work scrutiny, assessment information and lesson observations to secure judgements
 - creating and implementing accurate improvement plans, especially for English and mathematics, that are clearly focused on pupils' learning with time-limited, measurable outcomes for success so pupils' progress is improved
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so they can be effective in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility
 - providing high-quality professional development to improve the teaching of mathematics and to support those teachers whose practice is not yet good
 - rapidly implementing the performance management policy and setting targets for teachers that are closely linked to pupils' progress and achievement

- developing partnerships with local schools that will enable teachers and leaders at all levels to observe good practice and improve their skills
- ensuring governors gather more detailed and accurate information about the school's performance so they are better able to both challenge and support the school's leaders.

An external review of governance to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 July 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim executive headteacher, the interim headteacher, middle leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives from the local authority. Inspectors also spoke informally with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. Inspectors observed nine lessons, four of them jointly with senior staff. Aspects of safeguarding were checked. Inspectors also looked at English and mathematics books from a selection of pupils in each year group and at learning journals completed for children in the Reception class.

Context

Since the last inspection it has been agreed that the current interim headteacher will be employed as the substantive headteacher for the next academic year. The interim executive headteacher will not continue to support the school next year because he has been appointed as the headteacher of another local school. Additionally, the Year 1 teacher seconded from another local school will be employed permanently at the school from September and will continue to take responsibility for the leadership of Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The teacher with responsibility for the leadership of mathematics will remain at the school for at least the duration of the next academic year. The inclusion manager is currently absent from school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is improving as a result of improvements in the standard of teaching. This progress is stronger in mathematics and reading than in writing. Pupils' progress in reading has been rapid. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has improved, although gaps in pupils' knowledge need to be addressed if they are to reach the standards of which they are capable. The proportion of pupils in the Reception class achieving a good level of development has improved. Poor assessment practice in some year groups resulted in the inaccurate measurement of pupils' progress in the past. Teachers' understanding of the attainment of pupils is now more accurate.

Pupils' progress in phonics (the sounds letters and words make) has significantly improved as a result of a more consistent teaching approach across the school.

The achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium varies across the school. Pupils who need additional support, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making slower progress than their classmates.

Effective monitoring is not in place to check the impact of support these pupils receive on the progress they make.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving in many year groups because of good in-school training and valuable collaborative work with other local good and outstanding schools. As a result of this sharing of good practice, teachers have a better understanding of the features of good and outstanding teaching. This is leading to pupils making better progress. Despite these improvements the quality of teaching continues to vary too much throughout the school because aspects of good practice have not been used consistently over a sustained period of time.

Where teaching is stronger, teachers use accurate assessment information about what pupils know and can do to plan lessons that provide a range of activities that are well matched to pupils' needs and which present pupils with an appropriate level of challenge. In these lessons, teachers frequently check pupils' understanding, and address misunderstandings and adapt their approach effectively.

Marking and feedback given to pupils have improved. The school marking policy has been reviewed and refined. Teachers give pupils clear and specific guidance about how well they are doing and how they can improve. Although good practice exists in some classes, inconsistencies remain across the school about how and when pupils should respond to these comments.

The quality of classroom environments has significantly improved to ensure displays effectively support pupils' learning and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

A more consistent approach is being developed for the teaching of mathematics as a result of useful training and support. This is helping pupils to apply their knowledge more effectively to solve problems. The profile and importance of mathematical skills has been raised through a range of strategies, for example a parents' workshop and mathematical competitions for pupils.

Teaching in the Reception class provides too few opportunities for children to be inquisitive learners. Outside areas are not being used as an extension of the indoor space to support children's learning. Activities are more structured and purposeful but there are limited opportunities for children to practise their writing skills as part of imaginative play.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils has improved. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at break times was observed to be good. The school's behaviour policy is applied more

consistently by adults who supervise break times so that pupils understand more clearly what is expected of them. Pupils approach their work with enthusiasm and interest. They acknowledge that work has become more difficult and they are keen to rise to the challenges being offered to them. Positive relationships exist between pupils and adults in the school. Pupils who spoke to inspectors reported that they feel safe in school, that bullying is rare but that staff would deal swiftly and effectively with any that did occur. Pupils are using the 'buddy' system put in place at break times to help them manage friendship problems more effectively and older pupils who have taken on this role are proud of their increased level of responsibility. Information held by the school shows that incidents of bullying and exclusions have significantly reduced. Pupils report that behaviour is dealt with in a more consistent way across the school. They are clear about the ways they can earn rewards for good behaviour and the sanctions that are applied for poor behaviour. Pupils recognise that improvements in the indoor and outdoor environments have had a positive impact on behaviour and learning. As one pupil explained to an inspector, 'Pupils take better care of the school now.'

Attendance has improved as a result of the school working effectively with parents and carers and external agencies.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The interim headteacher is leading the school with determination and commitment. She is driving forward the required improvements with enthusiasm and energy. The interim executive headteacher has provided a highly effective level of support and challenge. The governing body and local authority are currently exploring alternatives for the continuation of this important level of support for September.

Senior leaders and middle leaders have written comprehensive and detailed improvement plans which are based on an accurate view of the school's current position and the key areas for improvement. Senior leaders frequently review the progress the school is making against specific targets and then adapt their plans appropriately. Subject and key stage leaders are taking an enthusiastic and proactive approach to monitoring their areas of responsibility. They are beginning to use a range of evidence, for example lesson observations and work in pupils' books to evaluate the impact of improvements and to challenge and support staff about the progress pupils are making. Useful training from a range of sources has supported the continuing development of their leadership skills.

Senior leaders have a comprehensive and accurate overview of the quality of teaching. This is based on rigorous and frequent analysis of a range of information collected from a variety of sources, for example lesson observations and assessment information.

A more rigorous collection and analysis of information about how well pupils are doing is enabling senior leaders to make more frequent and precise checks on pupils' progress. As a result extra help is being more carefully targeted to support pupils who need it. Teachers are more aware of the importance of the link between teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. However, performance management targets set for teachers do not enable leaders to hold them to account effectively for the progress pupils make. This is because the targets set for teachers at the beginning of the academic year were not specific enough.

The governing body is more organised and focused. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors are asking increasingly challenging questions of senior leaders. This is because governors have more information about the school's performance. The governing body has a good understanding of what has already been achieved and what the school needs to do to improve further. Governors are now linked to key areas for improvement and they have established more frequent visits to the school to look at these particular aspects of work, for example improvements in the teaching of mathematics. This is helping governors to check the progress the school is making more effectively. Recently, the governing body has rightly focused on successfully securing the continued employment of temporary teachers and leaders for September.

External support

Local authority staff have provided useful support. They have worked alongside middle and senior leaders to verify the judgments of these leaders across a range of monitoring activities. Support from the governor services adviser has helped to strengthen the skills and practices of the governing body.

Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the local authority has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose. Key to this has been the action taken to secure the longer-term leadership of the school at a number of levels since the last inspection.