

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0121 679 9158  
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



Mrs Paulette Osborne  
Executive Headteacher  
Harper Bell Seventh Day Adventist School  
29 Ravenhurst Street  
Camp Hill  
Birmingham  
B12 0EJ

Dear Mrs Osborne

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Harper Bell Seventh Day Adventist School**

Following my visit with Suha Ahmed, Additional Inspector, to your school on 8–9 October 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 fifth 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 three newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The training and support for them should be provided and led by the executive deputy headteacher from St Matthew's Church of England Primary School.

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 (IEB) and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

Cc. Chair of the Governing Body  
Cc. Local authority  
Cc. The Secretary of State

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and speed up pupils' progress by:
  - making sure lessons help pupils learn at an appropriately brisk pace
  - making sure that teachers know how well pupils are doing and plan lessons that help pupils to learn more
  - giving children in the Reception and Nursery classes more choice to learn through a range of activities
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to study science, history and geography and acquire ICT skills
  - increasing the amount of work pupils do to use and practise their mathematical skills
  - giving pupils clearer guidance on how to improve their work.
  
- Make sure that the school meets safeguarding requirements by:
  - carrying out fire drills at the start of each term
  - ensuring that staff know the whereabouts of all children at all times.
  
- Improve behaviour by implementing a system for tackling disobedience and bullying, involving sanctions and rewards, which is used consistently by all staff.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors by:
  - providing training, support and resources to teachers in charge of subjects to improve teaching and raise standards in their subjects across the school
  - implementing a rigorous programme to check and improve the quality of teaching
  - making sure that the teacher responsible for coordinating provision for special educational needs receives the full backing of senior leaders and the scope to take steps to improve the progress of pupils who find learning difficult
  - training governors to check the school's work and giving them accurate information so that they are able to hold senior leaders to account
  - improving leaders' methods for checking on pupils' progress and using this information to improve the quality of teaching
  - undertaking an external review of governance to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

## **Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 8–9 October 2014**

### **Evidence**

During this inspection inspectors jointly observed learning and teaching with the operational headteacher and strategic headteacher in a range of subjects in each of the school's eight classes, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, operational headteacher, strategic headteacher and members of the IEB. Discussions were held with pupils, members of staff, parents and a representative from the local authority. The views of parents were noted from the 32 responses on Parent View. Telephone conversations were held with a member of the IEB and a representative from the Birmingham Diocese. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's analysis of pupils' current attainment and progress, monitoring records of the quality of teaching undertaken by school leaders, and the minutes of IEB meetings. Additional documentation was scrutinised, including information about pupils' attendance and punctuality and the vetting checks on staff new to the school.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection in July 2014 an Early Years Foundation Stage leader, two class teachers and an executive strategic headteacher have started at the school. As a result, teachers have been allocated to teach different classes. The school's leaders, in partnership with the local authority and the proposed sponsor, the Birmingham Diocese, continue to pursue academy status. The number of pupils in the school who are disabled or have special educational needs is low and well below national figures. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school has had a recent influx of children newly-arrived in the country. In Year 6, for example, four pupils have recently joined the school.

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

Since the last monitoring inspection, pupils are making better progress in most year groups because they are experiencing more effective teaching over time. This is particularly the case in reading, where 100% of pupils made the progress expected of them by the end of Key Stage 2. However, progress in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 is still below that expected. Progress in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved considerably since June 2013, but is still below national figures.

Since the full inspection in March 2013, more children in the Early Years Foundation Stage demonstrate a good level of development and the expected levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in communication and language and physical development. Childrens' knowledge and skills in personal, social and emotional development, literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design have improved since the end of the school year in 2013. However, the

proportion of children reaching a good level of development in these areas is still below national figures. There is a gap in the development between disadvantaged children, those in receipt of the pupil premium grant, and other children in all the areas of learning and development except expressive arts and design. The gap is particularly marked in personal, emotional and social development and in the development of children's literacy skills.

In Years 1 and 2, more pupils are meeting age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. However, not enough more-able pupils are reaching higher levels in these subjects. Disadvantaged pupils do better in reading, writing and mathematics than non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Pupils' progress in reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 2 improved in 2014, particularly in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar where progress and attainment now exceed national figures. In mathematics, however, while more pupils reached the level expected at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' progress fell and was below national figures. Disadvantaged pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 in the summer of 2014 had made better progress than other pupils in the school in writing and mathematics and the same level of progress in reading. Information provided by the school shows that at the end of the summer term in 2014, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were not making the progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the work in pupils' books seen during the inspection shows that pupils are now making expected progress in these three areas.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching has improved since the inspection in March 2013. As a consequence more pupils are making better progress, particularly in reading.

Where learning is particularly effective, teachers use their good subject knowledge and accurate assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to plan activities that engage the pupils' interest and attention and are precisely matched to their abilities. In addition, teaching assistants are used effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and ability to solve problems. However, this effective approach to promoting pupils' learning is not consistent across the school. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers provide a range of activities for children, such as playing different roles when pretending to shop for food. However, in the Reception class the progress of children is not monitored and evaluated effectively. As a consequence, not enough children are challenged at the right level of difficulty through these activities.

Where learning is limited, teachers have not considered carefully enough what pupils, particularly the more-able pupils, need to be able to do and know. As a

consequence, learning activities are not always matched appropriately to their individual ability levels. Assessment of pupils' learning during lessons is inconsistent. Where learning is effective, teachers assess the pupils' understanding and adapt their lessons to ensure individual pupils' progress is maintained. However, some teachers do not address pupils' misunderstandings or misconceptions effectively. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics, where a significant number of pupils do not understand why they are using a particular method to solve problems.

Teachers' written feedback to pupils has improved since the last monitoring inspection in July 2014. As a consequence, the majority of pupils understand how to improve their work. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that pupils are acting upon the advice given and amending their work to make it better, particularly in writing. Pupils' writing skills are improving as a result of a focus on the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils are given opportunities to practise these skills in all subjects, for example in topic work.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' attitudes to learning remain inconsistent, particularly when teaching fails to engage their interest. Some teachers fail to recognise that they have lost the attention of pupils, particularly during lesson introductions when pupils are sitting 'on the mat'. As a consequence, pupils become restless, fidgety and lose concentration. Teachers spend too much time reminding them to behave appropriately and learning time is lost.

Pupils behave well when moving around the school. Inspectors witnessed a small number of pupils on the playground being aggressive during break and lunchtimes. However, this was appropriately dealt with by the lunchtime supervisors.

Pupils' attendance is above average. However, a minority of pupils persistently arrive late to school.

When asked, the majority of pupils said they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including resisting the attempts of others to persuade them to act in a way that is anti-social or unlawful. Pupils are clear about the different types of bullying and who to go to if they witness bullying. Pupils state that bullying incidents are quickly and effectively dealt with by staff.

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

Since the inspection in March 2013, the school has undergone considerable change. This has been well managed by the executive headteacher and members of the school leadership team. Leaders have used the appraisal process to appropriately challenge teachers' underperformance. As a consequence, some staff have left the school. The buildings and facilities have been enhanced and this promotes a positive

learning atmosphere. Teachers have access to appropriate resources and materials, including information and technology equipment.

Teachers' performance and the quality of pupils' learning are frequently and robustly monitored and evaluated. Pupils' books are monitored weekly and the findings quickly communicated to staff and the IEB. Actions taken to challenge teachers' underperformance are swift and appropriate. As a consequence, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils are making better progress, particularly in reading and writing.

Leaders have revised the programme of taught subjects, including science, history, geography and computing, and it meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. They have developed and implemented their preferred approach to assessment without levels, which is thorough and appropriate.

Training for staff focuses on the school's priorities, for example improving pupils' writing skills and the feedback pupils receive to improve their work. However, leaders are aware that inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour, and are providing further training for staff and support for pupils.

The IEB, established in April 2014, has a sound understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. However, its members recognise that they have not thoroughly evaluated the impact that the pupil premium grant and school sport fund spending have had on the outcomes for children. The IEB continues to support leaders in tackling the underperformance of teachers and in appointing new teachers and leaders. Essential policies have been reviewed and safeguarding checks meet current requirements. However, not all required policies and documents, for example the special educational needs information report, are on the school website. The IEB and school leaders ensure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain through assemblies, an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum, and the values which permeate the life of the school.

The school is awaiting the outcome of an application to the Secretary of State for Education to form a multi-academy trust with St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy and Nursery, and St Michael's Church of England Junior and Infant School.

### **External support**

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School and St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy and Nursery provide effective leadership and staff training. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have improved.

The local authority has provided further additional funding to improve the school's buildings, facilities and resources. As a consequence, teachers now have access to a

wide range of equipment including interactive whiteboards, which the majority use effectively. However, the local authority has not recently monitored or reviewed the work of the IEB.