

Tribal  
Kings Orchard,  
One Queen Street,  
Bristol  
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5323  
**Direct email:** [suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com](mailto:suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com)



22 January 2015

Virginia Fraher  
Interim Headteacher  
St Mary's RC Primary School  
Canterbury Road  
London  
NW6 5ST

Dear Ms Fraher

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of St Mary's RC Primary School**

Following my visit with Olson Davis, Additional Inspector, to your school on 20–21 January 2015, 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 March 2014. 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.

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Brent.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good so that standards, especially in writing and mathematics across the school, rise by ensuring that:
  - teachers assess work accurately, especially in writing, and use this information to set work at the right level for pupils of different abilities, so that tasks build on what they know already
  - teachers always provide pupils with clear guidance in their marking so that pupils know how they can improve their learning
  - pupils are provided with regular opportunities to respond to comments in marked work
  - additional adults have the necessary skills to support pupils effectively in their learning and to help manage their behaviour in lessons.
- Improve rapidly the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
  - leaders hold staff robustly to account to raise expectations for pupils' progress
  - regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement lead to quick action to improve teaching and achievement
  - information about pupils' progress is used effectively by leaders to identify gaps in learning for individuals and groups of pupils, and to put the right support in place so that all pupils make good progress
  - the success of actions to improve pupils' learning is evaluated, including for those with a statement of special educational needs
  - targets for staff performance are sufficiently challenging and are regularly reviewed so that staff know how to improve
  - an analysis of incidents of poor behaviour is undertaken to identify trends and patterns so that appropriate actions can be put in place to improve behaviour.

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

An external review of 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 20–21 January 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Meetings were held with two teachers to discuss the use of pupils' performance data and with the leaders of English and mathematics. Inspectors met with teachers and teaching assistants to feed back a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of teaching noted during visits to lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils informally as they moved around the school, in the playground and during lessons. Short visits to lessons were carried out jointly with school leaders, as were activities to scrutinise pupils' work in mathematics and English books. One inspector visited an assembly and spoke with parents before school.

### **Context**

There have been several changes to the school's staff. The assistant head, who had leadership responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage, left at the end of last term, as did the inclusion manager. Governors are currently recruiting for a substantive headteacher and an inclusion leader. An interim deputy headteacher was appointed in January to increase the school's leadership capacity. Two part-time consultants are covering the role of inclusion leader. One teacher has left and another joined the staff. A significant amount of refurbishment has taken place, with rooms and corridors being repainted. Two classrooms and the school library have been relocated. A room has been set aside for teachers to use when planning and marking pupils' work together.

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

The school's data for 2014 show that greater proportions of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 than other pupils in the school. However, disadvantaged pupils across the school are currently making less progress than others in reading and mathematics but slightly more in writing. Current tracking data show that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress in Key Stage 2, particularly those in Years 5 and 6. Pupils of Black Caribbean heritage made less progress during the autumn term than others in the school. A number of Year 6 pupils are receiving additional support to prepare them for the higher demands of the Level 6 paper in this year's national tests.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is variable across the school. Where teaching is strong, teachers ask questions which deepen pupils' understanding and allow them to

develop their skills of reasoning and explanation. Through effective questioning, teachers gain a clear picture of how well pupils have grasped the intended learning. They provide work that is relevant and well suited to pupils' needs. Where teaching is weaker, pupils do not have enough opportunity to reflect on, and respond to, teachers' questions. This leaves the teacher with a less accurate understanding of the pupils' learning needs and, in most cases, leads to pupils being set insufficiently challenging work.

Tasks and success criteria are explained well so that pupils are clear about what is expected during lessons. Teachers use the information they have about pupils' achievement to plan work at different levels. However, expectations of what more able pupils should achieve are sometimes too low. Occasionally they complete work which is too easy before being given appropriately challenging tasks. In mathematics, pupils sometimes complete too many questions of a similar level when they have already demonstrated their understanding of a concept. This slows the rate of their progress and limits the depth of their understanding.

Teachers' written feedback focuses mainly on what has been done well. However, this does not help pupils to improve either recently completed or subsequent work. 'Green pen questions', where posed, allow pupils to reflect on and improve their work. Where marking is most effective, teachers diagnose how errors have occurred in pupils' work and provide examples and comments to overcome any misunderstanding.

Additional adults generally support pupils' learning and behaviour well in class, allowing them to develop resilience in solving problems without unnecessary adult intervention. Where practice is strongest, additional adults ask well-judged questions and explain concepts clearly. On other occasions, time is not used well; pupils lose concentration while they wait for the whole group to finish a question before moving on.

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

Pupils are pleased that a significant proportion of the school has been redecorated. Those based in the relocated classrooms say there is now more room for them. Pupils move around the school responsibly, holding doors open for each other, staff and visitors. They are aware of the rewards and sanctions that are in place to manage their behaviour. Teachers record incidents of poor behaviour in class behaviour logs. The headteacher monitors entries weekly, recording any resulting action. However, the system for monitoring trends in pupils' behaviour over time is not yet fully established. On the few occasions when pupils lose concentration in lessons, it is generally related to a lack of challenge in their work. Pupils relate well to each other in the playground, playing in ethnically mixed groups, if a little boisterously at times.

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

The recent changes of staff, including those in leadership positions, have hindered progress. Nonetheless, the additional capacity provided through the appointment of an interim deputy headteacher has already allowed senior leaders' roles to be defined more clearly. Teachers have been deployed thoughtfully, allowing newly appointed staff to work alongside a more experienced year group partner.

As a result of a skills audit and review of the membership of the governing body committees, governors are now deployed so that they are able to apply their expertise more effectively. Governors have received a variety of training. This includes guidance about how to hold the school to account through having a better understanding of the school's performance data. As a result, they ask more searching questions of leaders in governing body meetings. Governors have undertaken visits to the school so that they have a better understanding of its operation on a day-to-day basis. They are aware of the need to ensure that leadership responsibilities are better delegated so that the headteacher is supported effectively by leaders at other levels. The named safeguarding lead has not undertaken the required training, and arrangements were made during the inspection for this to take place imminently. The deputy safeguarding lead has completed the required training within the designated time period.

Senior and middle leaders make regular visits to classrooms to evaluate the quality of teaching. They check for compliance with the school's expectations but do not put sufficient emphasis on the progress that pupils make over time. The mathematics and English leaders have visited classrooms and scrutinised pupils' work and teachers' planning. A new scheme of work has been adopted for mathematics to address the raised expectations of the new curriculum as well as previous inconsistencies in teachers' planning. Pupils now have more frequent opportunities to write at length.

Recent changes to the leadership of special educational needs has resulted in a more strategic approach to development in this area. Leaders are aware of the need for class teachers to take responsibility for the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Too much responsibility is currently delegated to those who provide individual support.

Phase meetings are helping to develop leadership capacity, to allow good teaching practice to be shared and to support teachers new to the school. The accuracy of assessment judgements has improved through the joint levelling and moderation of pupils' work. Teachers meet with leaders half termly to discuss pupils' progress so that those falling behind are identified quickly. The effectiveness of the support put in place to remedy this is checked by assessing pupils before and after the intervention. Although teachers are aware of their performance targets and their link to pupils' progress, the system lacks sufficient rigour for it to have maximum impact.

## **External support**

The local authority has allocated a new link advisor to the school since the previous inspection. A consultant has worked alongside leaders to support improvements to the quality of teaching and to validate leaders' judgements. The local authority has recently carried out an audit of the school's approach to behaviour management. The resulting report records many strengths which concur with inspectors' observations. A local authority officer has observed the teaching of phonics jointly with the English leader. The local authority is providing financial support for the additional leadership capacity. The rapid improvement group (RIG) receives detailed information from the headteacher about progress in each of the areas identified as needing improvement. However, documentation reviewed during the inspection does not make it clear how the RIG holds the school to account.