



12 May 2005

Mrs B Graham  
Headteacher  
St Andrew and St Francis CE Primary School  
Belton Road  
Willesdon  
NW2 5PE

Dear Mrs Graham

**Implementation of St Andrew and St Francis CE Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Neil Sortwell HMI and Juliet Ward HMI to your school on 28 and 29 April, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school has made reasonable progress since the last monitoring inspection and reasonable progress overall since being subject to special measures.

The school is permitted to appoint a newly qualified teacher from September.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for Brent and the Diocese of London.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of School Improvement

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF ST ANDREW AND ST FRANCIS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit 17 lessons or parts of lessons, three registration sessions and one assembly were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the chair of governors, the school's local education authority (LEA) link adviser, and the standards group and phase co-ordinators. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and representatives from the LEA and diocese.

Since the last visit, the pupils' progress has been tracked carefully, and recorded against National Curriculum levels. At Key Stage 1 the pupils are on course to meet their targets of 65 per cent Level 2 and above in reading, and to exceed the 66 per cent Level 2 and above in mathematics. The continuing weaknesses identified in the levels of pupils' writing remain and the pupils are unlikely to meet the 67 per cent target set for Level 2 and above in writing.

At Key Stage 2, the English and mathematics targets of 70 per cent and 66 per cent Level 4 and above are challenging, and the pupils have made significant progress towards meeting them; the assessments recorded in the spring term showed that about 37 to 39 per cent of pupils were working at Level 4. There are a further significant number of pupils who were working at Level 3A and 3B and who have been attending booster classes. The standards committee are confident that the school's targets are close to being met for 2005.

As in the previous visit, standards of work seen in lessons continued to vary from satisfactory to unsatisfactory and remain too low overall. The pupils made satisfactory progress in eight lessons, good in four and very good in two. In three lessons the pupils' progress was unsatisfactory.

The standards seen in the literacy lessons and in the pupils' books continue to be below the level expected for the pupils' ages; pupils struggle with recording their work, and many continue to mix capital and lower case letters, misspelling simple words. Very few pupils throughout Key Stage 2 join their letters when writing. The teachers are planning increased opportunities for pupils to write at length, and regular, taught sessions on spelling and sentence construction are being included in lessons. Some good examples of older pupils practising spellings and testing each

other were noted in one lesson, and effective teaching of how to record a sequence of events was observed in a Year 1 class.

Standards seen in mathematics lessons were below those found nationally at both key stages; standards were at expected levels in one lesson in the Foundation Stage. Pupils generally have difficulty manipulating numbers and applying what they know. This is largely because the pupils' basic mathematical understanding is not embedded firmly enough during their time in Key Stage 1.

Only one Key Stage 1 science lesson was observed during this visit and standards seen in Year 1 were at the level expected for pupils of their age. Standards seen in music were in line with expectations in Year 5.

The quality of teaching was very good in two lessons, good in four lessons, satisfactory in eight lessons and unsatisfactory in two lessons. More lessons were satisfactory or better than at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage was at least satisfactory with one good lesson seen. Unsatisfactory lessons were spread evenly across Key Stage 1, lower and upper Key Stage 2 phases.

The focus for this inspection was on teaching in English and mathematics.

The teaching of English is at least satisfactory and some lessons were taught well. The high profile of writing and story work around the school is aiding the pupils to read regularly for a number of purposes, for example, reading each other's book reviews and poetry. All these initiatives are supporting the pupils' reading skills and sight vocabulary, as well as fostering an interest in books, through for example, book week and book characters.

Marking in English continues to be variable, but on the whole the pupils' work is marked regularly and in the best cases the teachers provide very good guidance for the pupils; for example, by making suggestions how to structure a story ending to retain the reader's interest. However, in a minority of instances where work is not marked carefully, ongoing errors continue to be made, which reinforces poor habits, for example, in using a mixture of upper and lower case letters incorrectly.

Some good and very good mathematics teaching was seen in the Foundation stage and both key stages. Recent initiatives to improve teachers' planning and questioning are beginning to have a positive impact. The common features of the very good teaching included effective planning which catered for the needs of all pupils and intense questioning to reinforce learning and challenge thinking. In mathematics lessons which were judged to be satisfactory, teachers' subject knowledge was secure but progress within the lessons was marred by over lengthy

exposition and the pupils' lack of confidence when manipulating numbers. During this monitoring visit, teachers gave pupils more opportunities to try out their own methods to solve number problems than had been previously observed. Teachers continue to concentrate their efforts on the middle ability groups, but the less able pupils are well supported by classroom assistants. Recent initiatives to support the more able pupils have not yet made a sufficiently positive impact in mathematics lessons.

In each key stage the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy remains inconsistent, although work in books shows that there is now less variation in teaching between classes within year groups. The greatest inconsistency remains in Key Stage 1 where teachers' knowledge of pupils' progression in mathematical learning is not secure. For example, in a Year 2 class pupils were expected to draw simple coin shapes at the start of the week and by the end of the week were required to carry out complicated subtraction of money. Progress has been made in developing pupils' ability to apply what they have learned to word problems and opportunities to do so were provided in nearly all lessons.

Some good teaching was seen with the older children in the Foundation Stage. Activities were carefully planned against the Early Learning Goals, and imaginative teaching ensured that children made good progress. Since the last visit there have been considerable improvements in planning in the nursery. The new planning format links well with that of the reception classes, and has appropriate sections for evaluations. It is early days to assess the effectiveness of the planning in guiding the quality of the provision in the nursery, but the level of detail and clarity of presentation is good. The teachers throughout the Foundation Stage are making evaluative observations of pupils' learning at different points during each week, and these are recorded in the pupils' profiles. This is good practice. However, the effectiveness of the planning evaluations in informing the next steps for learning is presently limited to recording what was completed and generally whether the activities were successful.

In the best lessons, the teachers had a good rapport with pupils and succeeded in quickly engaging them in learning. Pupils were clear about what they had to learn. Questioning was focused and the pupils were required to think through their answers and explain themselves. In these lessons, pupils were also required to be active learners and teachers usually involved them in a range of short practical activities. These were followed by pupils being required to record information and then demonstrate what they had learned. Teachers were confident about teaching their subjects and skilful in managing pupils' responses and behaviour. Plenary sessions were used well to reinforce learning. One constant feature of the best lessons was that pupils showed a high level of enjoyment.

In the weaker and unsatisfactory lessons, the learning objectives were stated within the planning but teachers' understanding of subject matter was limited and opportunities were lost to extend pupils' learning. Differentiation was weak and on some occasions, what was expected of pupils was well beyond their understanding, resulting in frustration, low level disruption and noise. Even in some lessons judged to be satisfactory, teachers were not consistent in their management of pupils' behaviour.

The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes were consistently satisfactory or better in 14 lessons; they were very good in two, good in four and satisfactory in eight other lessons.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and when they move around the school; they are generally courteous and some are keen to talk about their work. In most lessons, even when their work was too easy or too difficult, the pupils listened attentively and tried to do their best. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the playground and in the dining hall are good and they generally play well together, co-operate with each other and are concerned to help each other; for example, the older boys and girls were playing a range of ball games sensibly, including football. Older pupils take responsibility to look after the younger ones.

The provision for the pupils' personal development is satisfactory; their confidence and self-esteem have improved as a result of an increased focus on celebrating their achievements and valuing their contributions. The quality of relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils is generally good. The school is a welcoming community; there is a positive ethos and staff morale has improved considerably since the previous inspection.

Very good opportunities are offered to older pupils to reflect and pray in the weekly celebration of Mass. In the service, one class of pupils was fully involved in presenting the theme which helped ensure the engagement of others.

The leadership and management of the school are good and this is reflected in considerably improved pupils' behaviour, the increase seen in effective teaching and better progress in lessons. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong direction for the school and ensure that planned improvements have happened in step with the action plan. The standards group is effective in providing very good quality information about pupils' progress. This continues to be used well to determine the placement of support staff alongside targeted groups of pupils. The group is beginning to use the pupil performance tracker system to identify trends in pupils' progress and the likelihood of meeting targets. The recruitment of phase co-ordinators is complete and they are clear about their priorities for improvement. The school has ensured that there are good systems in

place to enable information about teachers and pupils to be shared between the senior management team, the standards group and phase leaders.

The headteacher recognises the need to refine the school's action plan in order to reflect priorities and to link them to planned support for staff generally and specifically for those staff in need of more intensive support. It is expected that the planning should build on the developing role of governors to ensure that the monitoring of each strand is in step with planned activities.

The school's staffing is less secure than it was at the time of the previous visit and there are some worrying unplanned absences and staffing vacancies. However the management of these situations is sound. Staff training continues to have good impact on the work of all staff including classroom support staff who provide good support for the lower attaining pupils.

The governing body has taken on board the criticisms made during the previous monitoring visit. Many more governors visit the school to work within the strand action groups and to monitor developments. Governors have made a useful start in recording their visits and feeding back information to the school. Better attendance at governing body meetings has helped to improve its effectiveness. The chair of governors has fully recognised the need to improve the performance of the governing body and to publish the prospectus for the start of the new academic year.

The LEA has provided good support for the school through 32 visits for monitoring and advisory work since the previous monitoring visit. Visits have been better focused and have helped to secure improvement. The impact of LEA support on monitoring records to inform the evaluation elements within further refinement of the school's action plan requires strengthening.

## **Action taken to address the key issues**

### **Key Issue 1: ensure that there are sufficient teaching staff, management and learning support staff to fully meet pupils' needs**

Reasonable progress has been made in addressing this key issue. The appointment of key staff, including the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator is now complete. The standards group are providing effective support for the deployment of staff to support the school's most needy pupils. The phase leaders know what they need to do to secure improvement.

## **Key Issue 2: raise standards of achievement**

The school's tracking of pupils' progress is robust and the standards group is beginning to use what it knows to consider the pattern of pupils' progress, which is satisfactory overall. Reasonable progress has been made in addressing this key issue.

## **Key Issue 3: improve the quality of teaching and learning**

Progress in this key issue is reasonable. The overall profile of teaching and learning has improved since the previous visit, although there is still too much teaching which is unsatisfactory.

## **Key Issue 4: ensure that the misbehaviour of some pupils is not allowed to disrupt the learning of others**

Good progress has been made in this key issue, because the behaviour policy is applied consistently in most classes.

## **Key Issue 5: ensure that the prospectus reports fully on attendance figures and on school and national results**

The new prospectus is not yet published. Governors have acknowledged their shortcomings and are now taking the school's actions to secure improvement seriously. In doing so, they have shown that they are capable of providing effective support for the school and have begun to do so. Reasonable progress has been made in this key issue.