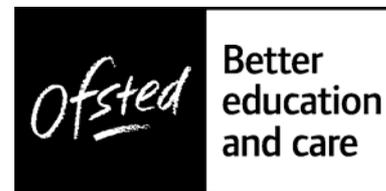


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Mr N Jefferson
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Jefferson

Implementation of Bishop John Robinson CE Primary School's Action Plan

Following the visit of Carmen Rodney HMI and Sheila Nolan, Additional Inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 July 2005, 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 second 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 newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Diocese of Southwark, and the Director of Education for Greenwich. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

IMPLEMENTATION OF BISHOP JOHN ROBINSON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN

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

During the visit 20 lessons or parts of lessons, three registration sessions and two assemblies were inspected. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the chair of governors and the LEA link adviser. 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 acting headteacher, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the LEA and the diocese.

The school has had some success in raising standards at Key Stage 1. The 2005 unvalidated results for the national tests at the end of the key stage indicate that the proportion of the pupils reaching the expected levels in reading and writing has risen. While the school missed the LEA targets for these subjects, the proportion achieving Level 3 has increased significantly. The maths results were similar to the previous year but with a decline in the percentage reaching the higher Level 3. The school has comfortably exceeded the targets for the 2005 Key Stage 2 tests in English and science and pupils have achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. The results for mathematics are disappointing and well below the targets set. The unvalidated results show that 90 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 and above in English; 97 per cent achieved similar levels in science but only 63 per cent did so in mathematics. When the results are set against those for 2004, they show a slight improvement overall but a significant decline in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or above. Minority ethnic pupils and pupils who have special educational needs achieved as well as their peers at both key stages.

Standards in lessons were broadly in line with age-related expectations at both key stages. Progress in lessons was mostly good and occasionally very good. The pupils in the Foundation Stage also made good progress.

This good or better progress in 19 out of the 20 lessons was a significant improvement on the previous monitoring visit. The pupils were adept at building on earlier learning and were keen to explain their understanding of the work. Good work habits and a willingness to think independently underpinned good learning. In many lessons, there were good opportunities for them to develop their speaking and listening skills through paired, group or whole-class work. They made the most of the opportunities to contribute to discussion and some of the older and more able pupils extended each other's points of view and formed well thought out hypotheses.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all 20 lessons. It was good or very good in 15 lessons, an improvement since the last visit. The most effective

lessons featured short and succinct learning objectives, well structured activities including independent work, group or whole-class teaching. Exposition was clear and there were plenty of opportunities for the pupils to contribute their views. Teachers built skilfully on earlier learning often through well targeted questioning. Time was used purposefully; cross-curricular links were well integrated into the activities; there was a positive ethos for learning; attractive displays were used to support learning; work was matched to the different needs of the pupils, and praise was used to acknowledge their achievements. The concluding sessions were constructive and provided a clear focus for reviewing and assessing the pupils' progress. A consistent feature of all lessons was the good deployment of the teaching assistants and the learning mentor. They were well briefed and contributed positively to pupils' learning and the management of their behaviour and resources.

In a number of lessons which were satisfactory overall, including one which was barely satisfactory, a number of weaknesses in teaching were evident. The learning objectives were long and complicated and often the pupils were unable to read or understand the terms used. As a result, some pupils were not clear about the targets they had to achieve and misconceptions were not picked up quickly. Information and communication technology (ICT) is being used more extensively; however, there were too many opportunities were missed to use the interactive white board and model clear presentation skills for the pupils to emulate. Some pupils' poor presentation and careless handwriting and errors were not sufficiently challenged as part of the process of marking. Day-to-day recording of the pupils' work was not always evaluative in pin pointing the skills they had acquired and what they needed to do to make improvements. Insufficient use was made of assessment for learning and on several occasions the pace was too slow.

The school supports the pupils' personal development well. Attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons were never less than good and in four lessons they were very good. Behaviour around the school and at break times was also good although there was some unchecked boisterousness in the dinner queue. The pupils were courteous to visitors and were confident to engage in conversation with adults. Those with responsibilities, such as the dinner-hall helpers, were keen to explain their roles. Others were able to participate actively in the whole-school assembly, portraying the parable of the talents very purposefully. Generally, relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and the adults in this multi-cultural community were harmonious. Exclusions are rare with only two fixed-term exclusions so far in this academic year.

The pupils' overall attendance rate for this academic year is broadly in line with the national median for primary schools. Rates of attendance have improved markedly since the spring term. Punctuality to school is steady with few pupils arriving late. The school has introduced a number of appropriate measures to improve the provision for pupils who have special educational needs. A new register has been prepared and individual education plans rewritten with the teachers taking more responsibility for them. The school has worked closely with external agencies and

provided suitable support for the few pupils with behavioural difficulties. Internal support is well linked to accurate assessment of the pupils' learning and behavioural needs. The involvement of learning mentors has been effective in providing guidance and support for pupils with behavioural difficulties. The range of provision for these pupils has improved but there has been no direct evaluation of the impact of the support. Training has ensured that teaching assistants have improved their monitoring skills to support the pupils. There are timely plans to audit the teaching assistants' skills. The school intends to use the audit to determine their eventual deployment.

The school has reviewed its assessment policy and has begun to make necessary improvements. The teachers have been supported in developing good practice by attending training sessions on assessment for learning. There has also been guidance on record keeping and tracking. Improvements to assessment practices are evident in the sound whole-school tracking and target-setting procedures and in the more regular information to parents on class targets. Half-termly unit assessments have been established in ICT and in mathematics. Those for mathematics, however, have not been used successfully to address underachievement at Key Stage 2. Information from progress and optional tests is similarly not yet well enough applied to identify necessary remedial action early enough. Some progress has been made in humanities in developing regular unit tests.

The difficulties in staffing, though confined in the main to one class since 2004, have had a negative effect on the learning of the Year 5 pupils. Discontinuities in learning have resulted from the too frequent use of supply cover throughout 2004-05. The acting headteacher has sensibly deployed the senior support staff and learning mentor to ensure that the class has adequate support.

The acting headteacher has continued to provide purposeful leadership and management. Priorities for development have been identified and are appropriately and clearly linked to performance management. He has successfully helped the senior staff and teachers to recognise the importance of having a long-term vision for achievement and raising standards. The staff have received appropriate training and support from consultants; they now have clear lines of responsibility and the monitoring of provision is routine. These actions have strengthened the school's capacity for improvement. However, while monitoring has improved, the evaluation of the impact of changes is still at an early stage. Appropriate arrangements are in place to handover the leadership role to the interim headteacher who will join the school in the new academic year.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has benefited from specialised training and a policy on monitoring has been developed that outlines their roles. Recent appointments have been made to further strengthen the governing body. The chair of governors acknowledges that governors are not yet regularly involved in monitoring the school's progress or sufficiently holding the school to account. Governors have however been proactive in dealing with the erratic attendance of

some staff. They have been actively involved in the recruitment of an interim headteacher. Plans are in hand to advertise the substantive post next term. The diocese has continued to provide a good range of support for the school and is working closely with the LEA.

The LEA has provided good support for the school in a number of areas including support and training for subject co-ordinators and governors. The LEA has a clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is continuing to work closely with the diocese and governors to bring about rapid improvement. Pertinent actions are being taken to find solutions to manage the deficit budget.

Action taken to address the areas for improvement

1: improve teaching and learning to ensure that pupils at all levels of ability, including higher attaining pupils, achieve as much as possible

Sound efforts have been made to improve the quality of teaching. Appropriate training and support from consultants for the senior staff and subject co-ordinators has improved the profile of teaching and learning. Planning is closely monitored and a draft policy on meeting the needs of the more able pupils provides clear guidelines and examples of work for staff to use. However, further work on the policy is planned and it has yet to be ratified by the governors. There are clear procedures for teaching assistants supporting the pupils who have special needs and routines for planning and monitoring their progress have improved. Specialist training has also been provided for teaching assistants supporting those pupils with English as an additional language. The school has made reasonable progress on this area of improvement.

2: improve assessment to ensure work is matched to the levels of pupils' different abilities and data from assessment is used in planning lessons

As noted above, the school has made steady progress in developing its overall assessment policy and practice. However, issues remain at classroom level. While marking is regular, it remains too variable in quality and pupils are not routinely aware of how to improve their work in all classes. Strategies to assess learning in lessons and to identify likely misconceptions are not planned thoroughly and consistently enough. The teachers' immediate records in all subject areas do not always provide clear and appropriate details of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses in areas of learning. Nevertheless, the staff have a heightened awareness of the importance of using assessment and tracking and the school, overall, has a better understanding of where further improvements need to be made. The school has made reasonable progress on this area of improvement.

3: improve leadership and management by focusing clearly on improving teaching and raising standards

The leadership team continues to work hard and the management structure provides clear lines of responsibility. The senior team has appropriately undertaken lesson observations and performance management targets are being set for staff. Policies have been reviewed and updated; however, they are implemented inconsistently and the evaluation of their use has not enabled the gaps in provision to be identified and addressed. However, appropriate steps have been taken to analyse the quality of the pupils' writing and to tackle weaknesses. Consequently, improvements in the quality of teaching have had a positive impact on achievement and standards.

The governors have prepared a new policy and protocol for visits; however, their involvement in the day-to-day management is marginal.

The school has made reasonable progress on this area of improvement.

and to meet statutory requirements:

4: ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in ICT, geography and history

Provision for the humanities has been improved to ensure it meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator has benefited greatly from her recent work on developing and monitoring religious education and is ready to apply the lessons learned to developing history and geography further. Useful policies for teaching and learning have been established and extensive work on developing schemes of work is under way.

The school has successfully installed a fully equipped ICT suite and all classes are timetabled for discrete sessions. While teachers have been made aware of the potential of the suite for cross-curricular work they have not fully exploited it for this purpose. Increasingly, teachers are gaining in confidence in using the interactive white boards. On a few occasions the pupils benefited from the use of classroom-based computers.

The school has made reasonable progress on this area of improvement.