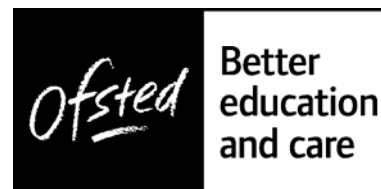


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12 December 2005

Mr Andrew Redman
Acting Headteacher
Bishop John Robinson Church of
England Primary School
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Dear Mr Redman

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BISHOP JOHN ROBINSON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with David Marshall, additional inspector to your school on 21 and 22 November 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2004.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, nominated members of staff and the chair of governors. There were telephone conversations with a representative from the LEA and the diocese.

Context

At the beginning of the present term, an interim headteacher was appointed from within the local education authority and diocese. The temporary appointment was the third since the school was subject to special measures. In the latter part of the term, the governors advertised the substantive post but did not make an appointment. Subsequently, the interim headteacher submitted a late application and was offered the permanent post which he will take up in January 2006. A new chair of governors and two newly qualified teachers were also appointed in

September 2005. The school has since lost one of the teachers but suitable steps have been taken to stabilise the staffing.

Achievement and standards

In the 2004 Key Stage 2 national curriculum tests, pupils achieved standards that were higher than those expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. This was a significant improvement on the previous low results and represents very good progress from their starting points. In the Key Stage 1 tests, attainment was in line with the national averages in reading, writing, and mathematics.

The unvalidated results for 2005 were slightly better than the previous year's in English and science. In English, 90% achieved level 4 and above, while 97% reached the same level in science. However, there was a sharp decline in mathematics with only 63% reaching the expected level and the school has swiftly analysed the results and introduced a number of strategies to concentrate on areas for improvement. Although nearly all of the pupils achieved the expected standard in English and science, most of the more able did not reach the higher levels and the school has now ensured that lessons consistently provide challenge. Pupils in the Foundation Stage are working within the early learning goals; however, their achievement is below the level expected for this age group.

Standards in lessons were broadly average in Key Stage 1 and good overall in Key Stage 2. The school's analysis of the 2005 results data indicates that white British pupils are not achieving as well as their peers by the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence confirms that in lessons, these pupils mostly perform equally well when challenged; however, over time, their overall results are not as good as pupils from other ethnic groups.

Personal development and well-being

The school supports pupils' personal development well. In lessons, attitudes to learning and behaviour were never less than satisfactory and were mostly good or better. The pupils enjoy their lessons and relate well to each other and the adults who work with them. They have many opportunities to begin to become good citizens as they readily take responsibility for a variety of tasks. For instance, their monitoring of the different zones in the playground was zealous and effective. They are given good opportunities to reflect on moral issues such as in an assembly when they thought about Advent and preparing for what Christmas should be about. The school provides well for the pupils to learn about their own culture as well as other cultural traditions around the world. The pupils speak confidently about the need to live a healthy and safe lifestyle.

Pupils' attendance is good but punctuality is satisfactory. The school has good procedures in place to encourage attendance and these work well. Good support is given to the few pupils with behavioural difficulties. There has been one fixed-term exclusion this term. The mentor continues to be effective in providing guidance and support to these pupils and the impact of their support is now evaluated well. The

more effective use of assessment information on the pupils' performance has enabled support to be accurately provided for those with a special educational need. These pupils respond enthusiastically to the extra help they receive.

Quality of provision

In all lessons, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. It was good in 14 of the 16 lessons seen and represents a further improvement since the last visit.

The most effective lessons had a number of positive features including: structured planning, appropriate activities for the different ability groups; precise learning objectives and time exploring the key words and learning outcomes with the pupils. There was a fine balance between practical work and teacher talk; the interactive white board was used well to engage the pupils, and targeted questions were used successfully to ensure that they had a good grasp of the work. For instance, in a science lesson, lively questioning involved the wide ability group forming hypotheses and making predictions for the fair test investigation. Additionally, there were opportunities for group, paired and whole class discussion and the concluding sessions were informative with individual pupils giving well thought out feedback. A striking feature of all lessons since the last inspection is the more inclusive approach to meeting the needs of all pupils. Careful deployment of teaching assistants and learning mentors is contributing to the pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English making good progress in all areas of the curriculum. The satisfactory lessons moved at a slightly slower pace and the pupils were more dependent on the teachers for direction.

Assessment information is now more rigorous; the pupils know and can explain their targets. The quality of marking is generally good. The teachers' comments are both supportive and demanding. Mistakes are noted and the pupils are given specific targets to improve their work. The review of assessment has led to good practice being established in all classes. Record-keeping and, in particular, the tracking sheets are enabling the teachers to provide accurately for the needs of all pupils. Half-termly unit assessments are used effectively to improve planning. Information from progress and optional tests are carefully recorded and used by all staff to develop planning. As a result, the teachers have a better understanding of each pupil's ability and plan accordingly. Strategies to assess learning in lessons have been introduced and have been successful in raising standards.

The pupils' progress was satisfactory or better in all lessons and mirrored the quality of teaching. Pupils were motivated when they were challenged to think for themselves and the teachers used targeted questions and practical activities to increase their responses to set challenges.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is now being used well by all year groups. Teachers have continued to gain in confidence and understanding in the use of ICT across the curriculum. The introduction of interactive white boards in all classrooms has been well established and the modelling of good practice was particularly effective.

Provision for the humanities has continued to improve. Careful monitoring of lessons and sampling of the pupils' work have led to improvements in the teachers' planning and increased their understanding of what they can achieve. Additionally, the quality of equipment has improved and there is rigorous assessment of the pupils' achievement each term.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2004.

- improve teaching and learning to ensure that pupils at all levels of ability, including higher attaining pupils, achieve as much as possible – good progress
- improve assessment to ensure work is matched to the levels of pupils' different abilities and data from assessment is used in planning lessons - satisfactory progress
- ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in ICT, geography and history – good progress

Leadership and management

The new acting headteacher is very experienced and has taken swift action to communicate his vision for the school. This has become more evident since his appointment to the permanent post was formally announced. He has been in the school for only ten weeks but has continued to build on the success of his predecessor by galvanising the support of the staff. The school improvement plan has been reviewed and indicates that the senior leadership team fully understands the strengths and areas for development. Different areas for development within each area for improvement have been teased out and clear actions identified. Planning is more focused with emphasis on linking performance management to teaching and learning, target setting and the pupils' achievement. Consequently, procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effects of recent changes on raising standards are more rigorous. The programme for improvement is realistic particularly as middle managers are more aware of the next steps they need to take when evaluating provision. Their capacity for development has increased. Firstly, they have become more self evaluative and are contributing to the whole school self-evaluation. Secondly, wider professional development is linked to the school improvement plan; therefore, their management skills are being sharpened. With the new leadership team and the greater involvement of staff in the evaluation process, they are more confident in driving forward improvements. The headteacher has made a positive start on re-structuring the staff and there is very good provision for the newly qualified teacher.

The new chair of the governing body is more prepared to ask difficult questions and brings much experience and expertise to the role. This is evident in the early analysis of the school's position and the steps it must take for all pupils to achieve their full potential. The governing body is becoming more focused and this is a positive development; however, it is still strengthening its capacity to monitor the school's provision. The governing body has three vacant posts but the diocese has

used its power by providing support and training and appointing an experienced governor. Positive steps are being taken to sort out the large budget deficit but discussion with the LEA is at an early stage. The budget deficit is hindering the school from maintaining the previously higher level of teaching assistants to support specific pupils. The school is aware that this could affect some pupils' progress.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2004:

- improve leadership and management by focusing clearly on improving teaching and raising standards – good progress

External support

The LEA's support has had some positive impact; most notably in the appointment of the new headteacher, training staff and in the use of various strategies to support teaching and learning particularly in mathematics. The school considers the LEA support to be very helpful and well received. The link adviser is aware of the school's provision and is working very closely with the senior managers on developing their self evaluation skills.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Priorities for further improvement

- ensure that assessment information is used consistently well in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for Greenwich and the Southwark Diocesan Board.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
H M Inspector