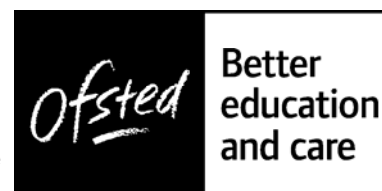


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28 November 2005

Miss Hawkins, The Headteacher  
Holy Trinity CofE Primary School  
Rickmansworth Road  
Northwood  
Middlesex  
HA6 2RH

Dear Miss Hawkins

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HOLY TRINITY CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with John Evans, Additional Inspector, to your school on 15 and 16 November, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

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

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leadership team and core subject leaders, groups of pupils, the chair and vice-chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA). Informal discussions were held with other staff.

### **Context**

There have been further significant changes to the school's staffing since the monitoring visit in June. Five new teachers, including most of the senior leadership team, joined the school in September. Only the headteacher, nursery teacher and some support staff remain from the time of the inspection in November 2004. Four new governors have joined the governing body. There is a new chair and vice chair

of governors as well as a new clerk to the governors. The process of reducing the school's standard admission number from 35 to 30 has been agreed with the LA.

## **Achievement and standards**

The school is making satisfactory progress in raising pupils' achievement. In the Key Stage 2 national tests, 86% of the pupils achieved a level 4 in English, 80% in mathematics and 97% in science. The proportion who achieved the higher level 5 in English was 46%, 37% in mathematics and 74% in science. The results in English and the Level 5 results in science exceeded the school's targets. At Key Stage 1, 88% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, 85% in writing and 94% in mathematics. At the higher level 3, 32% reached it in reading, 18% in writing and 29% in mathematics. Both sets of figures represent an improvement on the previous year. However, the school's data shows that achievement over time is significantly better in English and science than in mathematics. The underachievement in mathematics reflects past weaknesses in teaching resulting in gaps in pupils' knowledge that were noted at the last visit.

In lessons, standards in English, mathematics and science are generally above average. Pupils' achievement is improving in response to more accurate teaching, especially at the top of the school. Pupils are articulate and have plenty to say. Their written work is developing well with a reasonable range of writing for different purposes. The biographies of famous people, written by pupils in Years 5 and 6 during Black History month, are a prime example. Some helpful marking tells pupils what to work on next but this is not consistent across the school. In mathematics and science, progress is at its best where the teachers plan activities that give pupils opportunities to use their initiative and exercise independence in investigations.

In the Foundation Stage, children rapidly become familiar with numbers and counting, and acquire early understanding about addition. Their experiences in the nursery give them a good grounding of some basic scientific principles and how to link sounds and letters. However, in reception, the planned activities are not broad enough or varied enough to ensure that children build effectively on this good start.

The school has devised a register of pupils who have exceptional talents that need nurturing or who are gifted academically. These pupils have the chance to be involved in additional activities planned to provide an appropriate challenge. For example, through good links with a local secondary school able mathematicians attend an after-school mathematics club.

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

- raise standards and pupils' achievement in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT in Years 1-6 – satisfactory progress
- raise achievement for the substantial proportion of more capable pupils, including the gifted and talented – satisfactory progress

## **Personal development and well-being**

The pupils' behaviour is generally good in lessons, around the school, during assembly and in the playground. Their courtesy to visitors and their confident social skills put them at ease in conversation with adults and in reporting on their work in lessons. Pupils in Year 6 set a particularly good example for younger pupils through their attitudes and behaviour. They have a clear understanding of the school's agreed values and how their implementation has improved behaviour in the playground. Individual pupils report that they feel safe in school, when in the past they have felt vulnerable. The school has worked hard to clarify its values and has communicated them successfully to the pupils, who report that the Oekos groups have broadened their understanding of how they can play a part in promoting their own well-being and that of others.

While pupils have good attitudes to work, their attention wanders in a minority of lessons, particularly if there is too little for them to do. In most lessons, the teaching earns a lively, enthusiastic response and an eagerness to participate by answering questions or offering opinions and ideas. The pupils particularly enjoy lessons that have a practical dimension. Attendance is good; in the first half of the autumn term it was 96.3%, a figure significantly higher than last year's national average figure.

## **Quality of provision**

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Approximately half the lessons were good and one was outstanding. Almost a fifth remains inadequate.

A number of good features are common to almost all lessons. The school's policies on teaching shaped and agreed through training and discussion, are being implemented with increasing success. The beginnings of lessons are frequently characterised by a review of the previous day's work and provide a pertinent context for the introduction of new work. Planned discussions for pairs of pupils are often used successfully to keep all pupils involved and to help them order their thoughts in response to questions posed by teachers. Lesson planning is thorough. In almost all cases lesson plans identify clear objectives and provide a firm basis to guide the lesson's progress and momentum.

Occasionally, in lessons of a satisfactory quality, the lesson lacks balance. Too much time is devoted to direct teaching for the whole class at the expense of time for the pupils to tackle tasks. Thought is given in planning to the deployment of the teaching assistants. In many examples, the teaching assistants are intrinsic to the lesson's success. Their deployment to support specific pupils or groups of pupils, including high attainers, is a significant influence on the promotion of good learning. Occasionally, the assistants are underused, particularly during the opening parts of lessons.

The most successful lessons include interesting and often practical tasks for the pupils. Such tasks, notably in mathematics and science, inspire the pupils who relish the chance to work independently or in small groups with their friends. Skilful

prompting and intervention by teachers at these times helps the pupils think for themselves about fitting solutions to problems. Good use is made of assessment to plan further learning. In one case, plans for a mathematics lesson were altered substantially when assessment of the previous day's work revealed a widespread lack of understanding about what had been taught.

Where the teaching is inadequate, and in some lessons that are satisfactory overall, teachers' questioning has some shortcomings. Questions lack a clear purpose, for example to check pupils' understanding or to assess their progress. The management of the pupils' behaviour is not strong enough to promote good attitudes and the pace of learning slows. The work planned for pupils in reception is not linked closely enough to the curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

The curriculum for pupils in the nursery and for those in Years 1-6 continues to improve. The curriculum map outlines a suitable balance between subjects and shows a cohesion between what is taught in subjects and an ethos to promote the pupils' personal and social development. It reflects the school's diverse community and actively promotes an understanding of different cultures. Information and communication technology (ICT) is more closely integrated into the curriculum and is helping to strengthen links between different subjects. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is currently being developed but the continuity between that provided for pupils in the nursery and those in reception is tenuous. Planning for the latter lacks rigour and assessment is not yet firmly based on the 'stepping stones' within the curriculum.

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

- improve the curriculum, assessment and the quality of teaching in Years 1-6 – satisfactory progress

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher leads the school with a high degree of commitment clarity and energy. Her evaluation of what is working well and what still needs to improve is accurate. She is acknowledged by staff, governors and the LA, as the driving force for change and has set the tone for the tangible improvement in the ethos of the school. Much work has been done to create a 'can do' culture and she is empowering staff who are new to their leadership and management responsibilities. They all have clearly defined roles and a good understanding of what their responsibilities entail. Senior staff demonstrate an enthusiasm for extending their roles to augment the headteacher's leadership and a willingness to work hard. Despite the fact that many face a steep learning curve, they have considerable potential. The challenge now is to enable them to take control and exercise leadership in their respective areas of responsibility. Staff morale is high and team work is strong.

Termly action plans are working well. The 'aiming high project' with its clear targets in reading writing and mathematics set at different levels for groups of pupils gives a

clear focus to the drive for raising standards. Careful and rigorous analysis of performance data is helping to identify groups of pupils who need additional support or challenge. This information is now used increasingly by teachers to plan the work for different groups of pupils in their class.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They have a good understanding of how it is developing its strengths and of the remaining challenges that lie ahead. New governors are making a good effort to get to know the school. Individual governors are forging stronger links with subject leaders. A programme of visits by governors to see the school at work is being formalised to include a structured system for reporting back their findings.

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

- develop the leadership roles of senior managers, curriculum leaders and the governing body so their work is effective in improving the school, especially in raising standards – satisfactory progress
- cover the full range of the national curriculum in the breadth and depth required in mathematics, science and ICT and ensure Year 2 pupils in different classes are given the same curriculum – good progress

### **External support**

Weaknesses in the LA's action plan, noted at the last visit, have been dealt with effectively. The revised version fits well alongside the school's termly plan of action. The LA has pledged to produce a support plan each term to complement that of the school. The updated commentary has re-set the target date for the removal of special measures as December 2005. The LA rightly recognises this as ambitious and dependent upon continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

The LA continues to give a good level of practical support and advice, notably for improving teaching and for developing subject leadership roles. However, the support for the reception class has, reportedly, been contradictory at times. The LA has monitored the school assiduously and the resulting messages have added usefully to the school's own view of their progress. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the link officer from the LA and an adviser from the Diocese provided a valuable opportunity for senior staff to undertake dual observations. The LA is committed to responding to emerging issues and to providing additional support for behaviour management and for the reception class, as well as providing the support set out in its plan.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures– satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

**Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the continuity of planning and provision in the Foundation Stage
- Resolve the identified weaknesses in teaching
- Ensure that staff with leadership responsibilities develop their skills further.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Corporate Director of Education, Youth and Leisure Services for the London Borough of Hillingdon and the Diocese of London.

Yours sincerely

Jane Wotherspoon  
**H M Inspector**