

9 March 2006

Mrs B Graham
The Headteacher
St Andrew & Francis CE Primary School
Belton
London
NW2 5PE

Dear Mrs Graham

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ST ANDREW & ST FRANCIS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Kathryn Taylor AI to your school on 1 and 2 March 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in March 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 and deputy headteacher, the standards group, inclusion group, phase co-ordinators, the chair of governors and a representative from the Local Authority. Inspectors also talked with groups of pupils including the members of the school council.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit two teachers have left the school. A new teacher has been appointed to work in Reception.

Achievement and standards

The unvalidated test results for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have now been published and confirm that standards dropped significantly in 2005 in both key stages. At Key Stage 1 writing continued to be the weakest area and particular groups, including the summer born, white pupils, boys and those from mixed ethnic backgrounds did less well than others. At Key Stage 2 science is the weakest subject and the results have a negative impact on the school's overall performance in national tests. Just over half of the pupils achieved nationally expected levels in English and science and half did so in mathematics. Although boys did a little better than girls, no one group did well in the tests and black Caribbean boys performed poorly. It is very clear that not enough pupils who achieved average scores in their Year 2 tests went on to achieve average scores in their year 6 tests.

The main focus for this visit was to determine the extent to which pupils were beginning to make better progress in those year groups, given the initiatives which had been established by the leadership to raise standards. An analysis of recent progress records for each class, showed improvements in the number of pupils making good progress. In Year 3, 47% of pupils made good progress in reading, 44% in writing and 30% in mathematics. However, a significant percentage of pupils appear to have regressed in their learning. In Year 4, 44% of pupils made good progress in reading, 36% in writing and 24% in mathematics. Remaining Year 4 pupils appear to have made little progress over the term, although none have slipped backwards. In Year 6, 61% of pupils made good progress in reading and 41% did so in mathematics. Only a quarter of Year 6 pupils made good progress in writing with just under half who appear to have regressed.

Inspectors also analysed recent progress in Y1. In reading 58% of pupils made good progress in reading with 40% remaining static; 69% did so in writing with 31% remaining static. Progress in mathematics was less positive with only 27% making good progress and the rest appearing to make little progress.

The school's analysis of the impact of particular initiatives to raise standards is encouraging. The Year 1 "Read to Write" initiative shows that 80% of pupils made good progress in reading and 95% did so in writing. Similarly in the Y4 additional writing project, 63% of pupils made expected or better progress, although 37% made inadequate progress. This initiative has significantly reduced the number of pupils whose progress is inadequate.

A similar picture is seen across initiatives to improve identified groups of pupils' learning in mathematics. Half of the more able pupils, one third of those on booster groups and just over four fifths of lower ability groups made better progress than expected. The school's progress data shows that the setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6 are also securing improvement in mathematics and reading but less convincingly so in writing. Proportionally, identified pupils who benefit from additional EMAG and SEN support make better progress than their peers, with a large number making good progress.

Pupils made good progress in just over a third of lessons and satisfactory progress in half. In just under a fifth of lessons, pupils' progress was inadequate. This is an improvement since the last visit.

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

- Raise standards of achievement - satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave well, are polite and friendly. In two thirds of lessons behaviour was good and in one fifth it was satisfactory. In many lessons pupils work hard, try hard and stay on task. Most listen respectfully to their teacher and classmates. Pupils say that they are irritated when they are distracted from their work by silly behaviour. It is clear that pupils are now taking more responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. They have a clearer understanding of how well they are doing. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were inadequate in two lessons. This is an improved picture since the last visit.

Pupils who have recently joined the school say that they quickly make new friends. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, get on well together. Racial harmony is good. Pupils say that incidents of bullying have been reduced and they feel safe in school.

Pupils willingly take responsibility and fulfil their roles as monitors and school council members sensibly and with maturity. They contribute well to the school and wider community through the work of the school council, fundraising activities and links with the church. Personal development is well promoted by staff and consequently there are particular strengths in pupils' moral, social and spiritual development.

Pupils have good opportunities to work together during lessons and extra-curricular activities. They collaborate well in lessons where they are presented with shared tasks. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep safe

and healthy as part of the curriculum and the personal, social and health education programme.

Attendance is below the national average, largely due to term time holidays.

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

- Ensure that the misbehaviour of some pupils is not allowed to disrupt the learning of others - good progress.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning is improving steadily. In almost all classes adults develop good relationships with pupils and promote their personal development well. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed in lessons and working effectively to support learning.

Teaching and learning were good in 30% of lessons, satisfactory in 52%, and inadequate in 18%. Although this is an improving picture, there is still too much teaching that is inadequate and not enough good teaching to help raise standards and improve pupils' progress at a fast enough rate.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and good in music. In the rest of the school, teaching ranged from inadequate to good, with more inadequate lessons observed in Key Stage 1.

Where teaching is good, teachers have secure subject knowledge leading to confident delivery. Good questioning challenges pupils to think and to extend their learning, the pace of teaching is brisk, expectations are high but realistic and staff know how well groups are progressing. As a result of enthusiastic teaching, pupils are fully engaged, focused and remain on task.

In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, the work is not well matched to pupils' needs; they are not expected to work hard enough or there are weaknesses in teachers' management of behaviour. Pupils therefore do not make the progress they are capable of.

In some satisfactory lessons teachers remain too tightly aligned to their 'script' for the lesson rather than adapting their teaching to meet pupils' needs. On these occasions the planning limits rather than enhances learning. Recent work on improving the use made of pupil progress information means that teachers are more aware of the prior attainment of different groups of pupils' within their class. Work is usually planned for each group and pupils are set different tasks but these are not always finely tuned to meet individual learning needs. Some teachers' planning lacks sufficient detail,

containing single learning objectives for the class rather than recognizing that there may be different learning objectives for each group.

Staff have benefited from regular feedback on the quality of their teaching, and more recently from opportunities to observe good practice in other schools. This is a positive development which is yielding results. The leadership is aware of the need to continue to model exemplary practice within the school.

Marking remains inconsistent and does not provide enough feedback to pupils about how to improve their work. Common errors that pupils make with spelling and punctuation are often not corrected, either in English books or as part of their work in other subjects. Scientifically incorrect answers are sometimes overlooked. Too often pupils' work is not marked at all, and their work then deteriorates as a result.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a suitable range of activities, including those outdoors. Understandably, in the rest of the school a significant amount of time is spent on English, which does reduce the amount of time for other subjects, especially in Years 1 and 2. The school is working to extend opportunities to link work in English and mathematics to that in other subjects. Pupils have regular opportunities for exercise during physical education and swimming. After-school sporting activities provide opportunities for pupils to develop confidence, teamwork and initiative.

The quality of care for pupils who are vulnerable, have learning difficulties or disabilities and for those for whom English is not their first language continues to improve. Tracking data shows that pupils who are supported by learning support assistants, often outside of lessons, do well. Provision for the least able pupils in lessons is not as consistently good as it might be. Teachers' planning for these pupils and provision in lessons does not always reflect what is known about what they can actually do.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching - satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher continue to provide strong leadership and direction for the school. Since the last visit they have ensured that the school has been more sharply focused towards raising standards. Good use has been made of the information which the school has about pupils' progress to challenge teachers' planning and expectations. Although

more must be expected of some teachers to improve the pace and the quality of learning. There is evidence that as a result of the leadership's efforts, most teachers are now more aware of the need to rigorously pursue improved practice. With the support of the LA and diocese, constructive use has been made of partnerships with other schools which demonstrate good practice. There has been some success in addressing weaknesses seen within persistently weak teaching. There is also acknowledgement that more needs to be done to ensure that teaching is routinely at least, satisfactory. Phase leaders have monitoring and support time built into their programme to ensure that this happens.

The leadership team has worked hard to build the school's capacity to improve with some effect, although it is still too soon to see the full impact of the work in significantly improved teaching and learning. The focus needs to remain on the encouragement and exemplification of good and outstanding teaching.

Strategic planning accurately reflects the school's priorities and sets challenging targets for 2006 and 2007. These recognise that pupils in Years 5 and 6 have generally lower levels of attainment. One feature of the leadership is its willingness to abandon strategies which do not result in improvement. There has been some success in addressing weaknesses. The standards group, phase co-ordinators and inclusion group are working well together to secure improvement. This may be seen in the recent success of several initiatives to improve pupils' progress and in pupils' improved personal development and behaviour. The school has a reasonably accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and recognises what still needs to be done.

There have been recent changes in governance. It remains the case that a small group of governors are very proactive in supporting the school's improvement. There is a clearer understanding among governors that the two remaining and most important key areas for development for the school are raising standards and improving the quality of teaching.

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

- Ensure that there are sufficient teaching, management and learning support staff to fully meet pupils' needs - good progress
- and, to meet statutory requirements:
Ensure that the school prospectus reports fully on attendance figures and on school and national test results - good progress

External support

The quality of external support for the school from the Local Authority and the Diocese is good. There is clear evidence of both partners working more closely together with the school's leadership team.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures - satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - satisfactory

Priorities for further improvement

Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:

- making clear the links between assessment information and teachers' planning of future work
- providing continued support for teachers to increase the level of good teaching and address inadequate teaching
- demonstrating and exemplifying where good practice exists in the school
- ensuring that marking makes clear to pupils where they have made mistakes and how they can improve their work
- encouraging more flexible teaching within lessons to meet the needs of pupils

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, School Improvement Services for Brent and the London Diocesan Board.

Yours sincerely

Neil Sortwell
H M Inspector