

Tribal Education and
Technology
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

Ofsted helpline
08456 404045
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Mr Desmond Watson
St Paul's CE VC Primary School
School Lane
Swanley
Kent
BR8 7PJ

Friday 23 June 2006

Dear Mr Watson

OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for the help and assistance you and your staff gave me when I visited on Friday 16 June. Thank you for the time you gave to our telephone conversations and for the helpful information you provided before and during the visit. Please also pass on my particular thanks to the children and staff who met with me and to your chair of governors and the local education officer and school improvement partner.

Having carefully considered all the evidence presented by the school and the local authority, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress on the issues identified at the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection in October 2005 the school was asked to focus on four issues for improvement:

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress by making more effective use of assessment information to meet pupils' differing needs and by informing pupils of what they need to do to improve.
- Respond more quickly when pupils are making insufficient progress.
- Provide a sharper focus for school development planning and the actions taken to make improvements, so that they are more closely linked to raising standards.
- Increase the rigour in evaluating school effectiveness so that development planning builds on a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The school has taken determined action to address each of these issues. As a result, teaching has improved and is now good across the school, with outstanding practice in the Foundation Stage. Teachers are making better use of the improved assessment systems to ensure that work is more suitably matched to pupils' differing needs. Teachers' marking is better and now provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils understand and appreciate their teachers' marking comments.



Pupils are now assessed each half term and the outcomes are analysed to ensure that pupils are placed in the correct groups in classes and that all pupils, who require it, receive additional support. Teaching assistants have been well trained and they provide very good support for individuals and groups who require extra help.

Recently introduced target setting is helping pupils to understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work and pupils greatly value this. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 could explain how their work is improving as a result of knowing what they need to work at and receiving helpful feedback from teachers. When asked, pupils said they would welcome their targets being changed more often and would like them to be shared with their parents and carers.

Checks by the school and local authority clearly show that the above initiatives have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, pupil progress, and standards since the last inspection. There is quiet optimism that the great majority of the current Year 6 pupils will attain the nationally expected levels in their recent tests.

Staff and governors report that information from assessment and monitoring is now used much more effectively as part of regular school self-evaluation and to plan improvement. The school development plan has been streamlined into a useful working document. It is sharply focused on raising standards and has clear, measurable criteria by which to judge success.

The school has received good support from the local authority. The local authority school improvement partner has provided very useful advice and training for staff and governors including preparation for governors to undertake classroom observations. Senior staff and governors now have a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

The school has demonstrated a strong determination to improve and, through the commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors, has made good progress. This initial momentum now needs to be built upon by continuing to improve the approaches to target setting, monitoring and school improvement planning.

Yours sincerely

E A Riley
Additional Inspector