

Tribal Education  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0845 123 6001  
F 0845 123 6002

Ofsted helpline  
08456 404045  
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Mrs D Wilson  
The Headteacher  
Yorkswood Primary School  
Kingshurst Way  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B37 6DF

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Dear Mrs Wilson

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF YORKSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Introduction

Following my visit with Fiona Robinson, Additional Inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 October 2006, 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 June 2005.

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, deputy headteacher, senior leadership team, coordinators for English and mathematics, the chair of governors, the senior learning mentor, a group of pupils and a representative from the local authority (LA).

### Context

Since the last monitoring visit three teachers have left the school and two new teachers have been appointed.

## Achievement and standards

Unvalidated test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2006 show a higher level of attainment than in 2005 in English. However, results in mathematics and science are lower than the previous year. Results for pupils in Year 2 show a marked improvement in reading, although results in writing and mathematics are similar to 2005. The school assessed the progress that pupils in Years 1 to 6 made in the latter part of the last academic year. These assessments indicate that more pupils are meeting or exceeding their challenging targets, but there is still significant underachievement throughout these year groups, particularly in mathematics.

The progress seen in lessons and in pupils' work is inconsistent from Year 1 to Year 4. In these classes too many pupils are not achieving as much as they could. In contrast, in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is better, the majority of pupils are making good progress.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2005:

- raise standards of literacy – satisfactory.

## Personal development and well-being

The good behaviour of pupils seen at the time of the previous monitoring visit has been maintained. Pupils throughout the school are pleasant and well mannered. As a result of improved lesson planning, most pupils are keen to learn and few of them now misbehave in lessons. In most lessons, pupils try hard and are keen to answer questions. Reward systems are popular with pupils and help to motivate them further. Pupils enjoy school, especially practical tasks and activities such as football and netball. There are few incidents of unkind behaviour or bullying and pupils know who to approach if they have a problem.

The school is working effectively with parents to improve attendance. They understand that attending school every day will give their child the best chances in life. Attendance has improved considerably and is now average. Pupils enjoy competing for 'Sam Bear' and 'Harry Hare' each week for good attendance. Links with the education welfare officer are very good and there are effective procedures in place to monitor absences. The senior learning mentor is successfully working to improve the attendance and punctuality of the small number of pupils whose attendance is still not good enough.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2005:

- raise the level of attendance by involving parents more constructively – good.

## Quality of provision

Although there is less unsatisfactory teaching than at the time of the last monitoring visit, there is still not enough that is good or better. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 is good and some outstanding teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage. However, in Years 1 to 4 the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent and there is too much teaching which is not good enough.

The good and outstanding teaching seen in the Foundation Stage featured well planned and exciting activities which provided excellent challenge for all of the children. Adults provided very good role models, motivating pupils very effectively to reach their potential. The children were keen to learn in this purposeful and stimulating environment. In Years 5 and 6, lessons were delivered with pace and enthusiasm. The learning objectives were clear and pupils were challenged to do their best. The learning activities were relevant and the pupils were enthusiastic in their learning.

Where lessons are less effective, objectives are unclear and activities are not sufficiently motivating. Lessons lack sufficient pace and tasks are not challenging. As a result, too many pupils make limited progress because they do not concentrate or complete their work.

More consistent use is being made of the school's marking policy. Evidence in pupils' English and mathematics books indicates that pupils are given appropriate guidance to improve. Throughout the school pupils are aware of their targets and most teachers are making effective use of assessment to plan the next steps in learning.

The governors have now approved the school's health and safety policy. Risk assessments have been completed systematically for all activities. Staff are fully informed and procedures to minimise risks to pupils are followed.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2005:

- raise the standard of teaching and learning all round – satisfactory
- ensure that auditing of health and safety procedures is systematic and that all risks are assessed – met in full.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school have continued to improve and responsibility is now shared appropriately amongst senior staff. Senior teachers and subject leaders for mathematics and English all have clearly defined roles. Good quality training and support has been provided both within school and with the assistance of specialist teachers from other schools. As a result the leadership team is now working effectively to drive forward school improvement. All staff have responded well and there is a

clear sense of determination to work together to improve teaching and raise standards. Teachers at all levels are highlighting their own development needs and colleagues are working together to help each other develop their skills.

The school has prepared an appropriate plan to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The senior team are fully involved in carrying out this work and they are well supported by expertise from the LA. The notes produced and the feedback for teachers are helpful in bringing about improvements. However, not all reports are sufficiently focused and many development points lack the precision required to bring about rapid improvement in pupils' learning. Lesson observations are not rigorous enough and do not provide teachers with clear judgements about the quality of their teaching.

Good use has been made of the accurate information the school has gathered about its own performance to begin to prepare an improvement plan. This is a comprehensive document addressing the school's most pressing priorities. The planned objectives are very clear with teaching and learning receiving appropriate priority. Actions are carefully planned in sensible steps, although many of the success criteria are not easily measurable. Many activities are timetabled to be very close together and this is likely to make it difficult for the school to manage.

The work the school is doing to track the progress of individual pupils is detailed. However, it does not enable the school to measure progress clearly and accurately. As a result it has proved difficult for the school to demonstrate the effect of its improvement work on the progress the pupils are making.

#### External support

The school has continued to benefit considerably from the good support provided by the LA advisors, consultants, two advanced skills teachers, and two consultant headteachers. They have provided good professional support and training for the leadership team as well as helping to improve planning and assessment.

#### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning further by making best use of the expertise that already exists in the school and eliminate unsatisfactory practice.
- Increase the rigour of monitoring and evaluation in order to highlight weaknesses and promote good practice.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Solihull.

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby  
Her Majesty's Inspector