



Mr Rob Freeth
Westminster Church of England Primary School
Westminster Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD3 0HW

22 November 2006

Dear Mr Freeth

FRESH START: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WESTMINSTER CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Marie Cordey and Ron Bulman, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 21 and 22 November 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 opened in September 2005.

This letter will be published 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 and members of staff. Discussions were held with the chair of governors and a representative from Education Bradford. Informal discussions were also held with groups of pupils and a Key Stage 2 assembly was observed.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, pupil numbers have declined slightly to 319. A member of the teaching staff has left the school and a newly qualified teacher has been appointed. Additional staff to work at lunchtime and another teaching assistant have also joined the staff.

Achievement and standards

Although standards remain low throughout school, change for the better is being seen in pupils' achievement. This is because of the steady improvement made in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils who are more able are beginning to make better progress. In the 2006 national tests for pupils in Year 6 the proportion attaining the higher levels improved in English and particularly in mathematics.

In lessons most pupils make satisfactory progress and although this is becoming more consistent through school, consistency is not assured. As a result pupils' progress and achievement is not yet good enough to ensure that standards rise at the pace needed. A contributory factor to this remains the weaknesses in pupils' basic literacy skills. However, the proportion of consistently good and better teaching and learning is not high enough to make the impact needed on raising standards.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils and teachers recognise the continuing improvement in attitudes and behaviour which has led to an atmosphere in school more conducive to learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school, feel safe and say that occasional problems including bullying are quickly sorted out. They are proud of their school and take advantage of the enrichment it has to offer, for example, the school's increased opportunities for them to use information and communication technology (ICT). This improved provision is helping to enhance pupils' ICT skills and benefiting them in preparation for their later life. Pupils are keen to make whatever contribution they can to the school's smooth day-to-day running. The school council is valued by members but its development remains in its early stages and requires more work. Attendance continues to improve. It currently stands at 94.7% which is higher than the same period of last year when it was 91.2%.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. During the visit, good examples were seen. Characteristics of these good lessons included effective planning to provide stimulating activities for pupils and strong relationships. In a mixed Year 1 and 2 lesson pupils enjoyed finding out about the past and its contribution to life today. The teacher's

demonstration of flat irons and nineteenth century carpet sweepers, compared with modern electric steam irons and vacuum cleaners, promoted the pupils' enthusiasm, enjoyment and knowledge. Pupils who are more able are also beginning to make improved progress. This is because their needs are better identified and planning includes more challenging work.

A small proportion of inadequate teaching remains. The preparation and presentation of lessons varies. Where it could be better, work is often similar for pupils despite a range of ability in classes, for example, in middle and lower sets. This is made worse in the lower sets where there are large numbers and, given the need, there is insufficient support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In one lesson, the teacher worked harder than the pupils and pupils were insufficiently involved in their learning. Consequently in these circumstances pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The creative curriculum is in its early stages of development but is encouraging pupils' enjoyment. The themed approach allows for a greater variety of subjects to be linked, for example, to improve pupils' literacy skills through ICT. This has yet to spread to other subjects and errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not generally corrected unless they occur in English lessons. Improved provision in ICT has enhanced both teachers' and pupils' skills. Girls and boys have responded well to the use of the inter-active whiteboard and are keen users of the computer suite. ICT has also contributed positively to the engagement of boys. Their response is aiding the school's focus to improve boys' achievement.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is improving at a steady pace due to the employment of new staff, strong support provided by Education Bradford (EB) and the application of policies drafted by the coordinator for special educational needs. Overall, pupils benefit from better quality individual education plans. Improved and more detailed school records show that some pupils are making better progress, particularly in Years 2 and 5. They also show more clearly which pupils need support and intervention. Parents are more involved than they were and teachers are becoming more aware of how to assess pupils' needs and adapt the work to suit individuals. However, this practice is not yet consistent throughout school.

The school is beginning to address the issue of providing for the high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Support

from EB has been welcomed. As a result there is growing staff expertise as demonstrated by their confidence to use beneficial strategies in lessons, such as 'talking partners'. However, some of the individual support is less well adapted to pupils' particular requirements. The school is doing much to deploy the various means of support at its disposal. However, well focussed provision, to meet the individual needs of pupils who have English as an additional language and whose access to the curriculum is restricted by poor levels of literacy, remains an area for development.

The guidance of pupils' academic development is showing early signs of improvement. The school is starting to keep more detailed records. Assessment is improving satisfactorily and, as a result, pupils who are more able are being better challenged in lessons. However, pupil records reveal the need to raise the aspirations of both staff and pupils. There remains much to do in the analysis of available data, the setting of targets and the sharing of them with pupils and their parents.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in July 2006.

- Continue to develop the use of assessment information to track progress, identify underachievement, set challenging targets and support effective learning – satisfactory progress.
- Improve provision for pupils with English as an additional language and for those pupils who are more able - satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Westminster C of E Primary School has made satisfactory improvement since it opened. Although the staff team is inexperienced they have worked together well to improve their expertise. As a result of effective consultancy coordinators are developing in their confidence to lead their subjects. The quality of teaching is improving. Provision for ICT has improved and developments towards a 'creative curriculum' are beginning to make a difference to pupils' enjoyment and to teachers' confidence. Pupils' progress is now being tracked and targets are being set. Leaders in school continue to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. All of this work reflects the school's plans for improvement. Although the action taken is generally positive, the rigorous evaluation of it is not in place. Leaders, managers and governors do not know the specific impact of the action they have taken.

They are still not clear about the progress made by the various and different groups of pupils in school and why some might achieve better than others. The thorough analysis of data and assessment information gathered has yet to take place, so the school is not absolutely clear about the rate of progress that pupils' have made and whether it is fast enough. As a result school development planning for the new school year is broadly based and does not rigorously reflect the school's drive to raise standards.

The governing body continue to be supportive of the school. However, little progress has been made to improve their capability to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. As result, despite their best intentions, they are unable to act effectively as a critical friend.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in July 2006.

- With a clear focus on raising standards, improve the rigour of school improvement planning and monitoring and evaluation of the school's work – inadequate progress.

External support

Since Westminster C of E Primary opened EB has provided an effective level of support to aid the school in its development. Westminster is now involved in the Intensifying Support programme. The plan for this is well focussed with clear outcomes against which progress can be measured. However, this practice is not consistent across all the school's planning. A greater level of challenge, alongside the support, is now required from EB. This is to ensure that the school is rigorous in its evaluation of action taken that in turn informs effective self evaluation and development planning. Similarly, greater direction is required to aid the governing body in its capability to fulfil its role effectively.

Main Judgements

The school's overall progress - satisfactory.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that school development planning to raise standards is informed by rigorous monitoring and evaluation of provision and pupils' progress.

- Improve the consistency of good and better teaching through the effective challenge of all pupils to achieve their best.
- For those pupils who have English as an additional language, ensure that provision to meet their needs is well focussed and consistent throughout school.

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

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley
H M Inspector