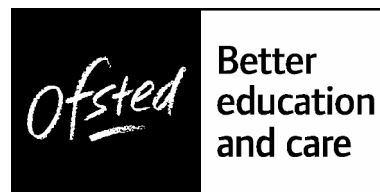


Tribal Group
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

Ofsted helpline
08456 404045
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



19 February 2007

Ms Jane Mason
The Headteacher
Amington Heath Community School
Quince
Amington
Tamworth
Staffordshire
B77 4EN

Dear Ms Mason

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 January 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to staff for their cooperation, to those pupils who talked to me, and to your local inspector and chair of governors for their time.

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.

As a result of the inspection on 14 and 15 June 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in all subjects, but particularly English, mathematics and science
- improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

Although standards are still well below average throughout the school, there are signs of improvement. Progress with this issue is satisfactory.

When the children enter Nursery, their abilities vary considerably, but overall are below expected levels. The children look forward to coming to Nursery

and settle quickly to activities because of the warm welcome they receive. However, their limited communication and concentration skills hamper early learning. The children make satisfactory progress overall in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) but progress in communication, language and literacy is slower than other aspects of learning. The children's speaking skills develop well but knowledge of letters and sounds is insecure because the teaching of this aspect of the curriculum is not effective enough.

During their time in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the children make satisfactory progress. The support given to children with learning difficulties and disabilities helps them to contribute to lessons, feel confident as learners, and make good progress towards their targets. However, the more able children do not progress as well as they should because some of their work is too easy. Girls and boys progress at similar rates and children of both sexes contribute equally in lessons.

The children enjoy reading and having stories read to them, but their limited knowledge of letters and sounds when they start Year 1 is a barrier to their developing literacy skills. As their knowledge of letter sounds improves, their reading becomes much more fluent and this helps them to understand the themes in their books and appreciate different styles of writing. Progress in reading through Key Stage 2 has improved and is more rapid than progress in writing. The recent focus on 'big writing' has helped the children to enjoy writing for a range of different purposes. Their handwriting is becoming neater but their insecure spelling and punctuation skills are still a barrier to working quickly and independently.

In mathematics, the children's numerical skills are progressing well. Children explain their methods confidently, but have more difficulty in applying their knowledge to new problems. The emphasis given to learning multiplication tables is helping the children to calculate more quickly and confidently. The children really enjoy science, particularly the opportunities to explore and investigate. Although the school did not achieve its expected targets last year, there are signs of improvement this year. Children in Year 6 talk confidently about their work and understand the importance of making their tests fair and recording their results accurately.

The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the quality of teaching. Teaching through the school as a whole is satisfactory, with some highly effective features in Year 6. In all year groups, the teaching has some consistently good features, such as the warm relationships staff enjoy with the children and the clear expectations of good behaviour. Most of the children respond well to tasks and they listen attentively to their teachers, but they do not always listen to each other's contributions well enough. The most effective teaching draws all pupils into class sessions, by carefully chosen questions which are geared to individual children.

Some very useful work has been done to help teachers improve their assessment skills. The teachers are now much clearer about the specific levels that their children have reached. However, they do not all use this information effectively in their planning and so some of the work is still not matched well enough to the needs of the children. Consequently, some of the work is too easy for some and too difficult for others. There are also inconsistencies in how work is marked. Marking is better in English than in mathematics. There are examples of excellent marking which celebrates achievement and identifies the next steps for the children. Where remarks are less helpful, comments are too general, not related to the targets the children are aspiring to achieve, and the teachers' writing is not a good enough model for the children to emulate. Some teachers encourage the pupils themselves to be involved in the assessment of their own work and provide them with useful success criteria to judge it. This really helps the pupils to reflect on their work and understand how to improve it.

Teaching assistants are deployed very well during group activities, but are not used efficiently during whole class teaching times. Their work with children with learning difficulties and disabilities is effective and the care that they show to these pupils helps them to learn. Curriculum targets for these children are appropriate but individual plans for those with behaviour difficulties are not specific enough and are not reviewed frequently enough. Some very effective work has been done to help the children understand their targets. Most of them know what they are trying to learn and what they must do to achieve their targets. However, some of the less able children are still not clear enough about what they are learning or how to improve.

The local authority provides satisfactory support to the school. The plan outlining the actions that the local authority is taking to assist the school is suitable and is well focused on the main areas in need of improvement. A good feature of the support given by the local authority is the programme of regular visits to check on the quality of teaching and the helpful reports that are written as a result.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Mary E Hamby
Her Majesty's Inspector