

Cambridge Education
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

T 01223 578500
F 01223 578501
Risp.inspections@camb-ed.com

Ofsted helpline
0845 640 4045



The Headteacher
St Lawrence Church of England Primary School
Rowhedge
Colchester
Rectory Road
CO5 7HR

24 January 2007

Dear Mrs Cooke

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 23 January 2007 with my colleague, Usha Devi, Additional Inspector. We were grateful for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. Please give our thanks to the pupils and staff who gave up part of their lunch hours to speak with us.

As a result of the inspection on June 2006, the school was asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning; address the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils; and raise standards and achievement.

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

The section 5 inspection report of June 2006 correctly highlighted notable weaknesses in the standards and achievement of pupils in Year 6. In this year group, weak teaching and poor behaviour by a minority of pupils, notably boys, combined to produce results that were well below the local and national average. In Year 2, standards and achievement had declined steadily for a number of years.

Standards are now improving significantly in Year 6 as a result of good teaching. Reading has improved noticeably because of very good oral work but writing skills require more emphasis. In Year 2, pupils are making satisfactory progress in reading and mathematics; the proportion of pupils on track to reach the desired standard is above average. As with Key Stage 2, more needs to be done to develop the pupils' writing skills. Similarly,

weaknesses in the pupils' literacy skills in Years 3 and 4 reflect previous underachievement and require more attention.

The quality of teaching is good and has improved significantly. The management of behaviour is usually effective and more consistent than that noted in the section 5 inspection report. Very good monitoring and evaluation procedures have been introduced with clear guidance provided for all staff. The headteacher was invited to join HMI in a joint observation of teaching; her judgements were succinct and secure.

In a vibrant literacy lesson, Year 6 pupils displayed an outstanding grasp of characterisation. Their excellent understanding of the text produced a rich and imaginative vocabulary. Grammatical understanding was good. Behaviour was excellent in this challenging lesson.

In lessons where tasks met the pupils' different learning needs, the pupils responded enthusiastically and their attitudes to learning were good. Where teaching was less effective, tasks did not provide the structure to give pupils access to the work; sound introductions were followed by tasks that failed to meet the pupils' learning needs. In some instances the lack of engagement developed into social chatter.

Relationships between pupils are good. They take turns, support each other and work well during group activities. Pupils are keen to engage in conversations about the school. They say that they like coming to school because everyone is polite and friendly. The school seeks the views of the pupils through the school council, who meet regularly to discuss the ways in which the school can be further improved. Members of the council feel that the staff listen to what they have to say and that lessons are fun because they have 'something new to learn everyday'. Attendance has improved significantly and is now in line with primary schools nationally.

The school has found the local authority's support helpful and is now sufficiently confident to develop key ideas itself. However, addressing the underachievement that became evident in the last two years will require some elements of support to be continued into the next academic year.

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

Yours sincerely

David Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector