

Mr Gavin Hamilton
The Headteacher
Lady Modiford's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Walkhampton
Yelverton
Devon
PL20 6JR

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Dear Mr Hamilton

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help that you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 December 2006, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would also like to thank the staff, governors and the children for spending time with me discussing aspects of how the school has improved.

As a result of the inspection on 7 June 2006, the school was asked to: rectify the weaknesses in teaching to ensure that all pupils do as well as they should in all year groups; make better use of assessment data on individual pupils to check how well the school is meeting their needs; improve the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage; and, develop further the roles of subject leaders and governors in supporting school improvement.

Much good progress has been made by the school since it was last inspected, but this is not the case in some specific areas. Having considered all the evidence, I am therefore of the opinion that, at this time, the overall progress of the school is unsatisfactory. Ofsted will continue to monitor the school's progress on the issues where improvement has so far been inadequate.

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully moved forward in many of the areas listed above. The headteacher has implemented good quality actions plans and, along with staff and governors, works with huge commitment and enthusiasm to ensure the school gets fully back on track.

Good progress has been made with improving assessment.

The headteacher has installed comprehensive systems that staff now use well to track pupils' progress in fine detail. Staff increasingly make good use of this information to fine tune their lesson planning and ensure that the

activities provide challenge for pupils of all ability levels. Pupils are closely involved in these processes. Teachers are generally defining clear targets so that individuals know exactly what to do to make their work better. Pupils evaluate their work carefully and, through the use of marking 'success ladders', they gain a very accurate understanding of how well they are doing. Good, and sometimes excellent, marking by teachers further fuels pupils' knowledge of how they are getting on and how to improve.

Improved assessment work has helped trigger lots of good improvement with teaching in the classes for pupils currently in the Year 2 to 6 age groups. It enables teachers to plan lessons in great detail and to make sure that work is specifically targeting and challenging pupils in different ability groups. The assessment tracking system currently shows that most of these pupils are achieving well and making good progress. During the inspection, some good and excellent teaching was observed for Year 2 to 6 pupils. Activities moved at a good, and often very good, pace in lessons. A high level of interaction between staff and pupils ensured that all individuals sustained a motivated approach and completed a substantial amount of good quality work. In addition, the school has adopted an innovative approach to supporting pupils' learning in lessons through the creation of 'learning walls'. Through this means ongoing aspects of pupils' work are displayed to give easily accessible extra support to all individuals during activities.

There has been inadequate progress with improving the Foundation Stage curriculum and in rectifying the weaknesses in teaching to ensure that all pupils do as well as they should. The strong traits of improvement noted with teaching throughout the rest of the school are not in evidence within the teaching for the Foundation Stage and Year 1. Although a friendly and encouraging atmosphere is established, work is sometimes too hard for the Foundation Stage children and often too easy for the Year 1 pupils. A great deal of support has been invested to help improve the teaching in this area of the school, for example the class size has been reduced, with Year 2 pupils who were in this class, having now been moved to another class. However, despite this and the support from the headteacher and local authority advisory staff, things are not improving. Work samples for Year 1 pupils, and for Year 2 pupils who had previously been in this class, show that they made very little progress. External support has done much to help ensure the full curriculum provision for the Foundation Stage is in place. However, lesson observations indicate that the provision is still not being used properly to provide children with a full breadth of understanding in all of the areas of learning in the way that it should. Further strategies need to be developed and implemented as soon as possible in this part of the school to rectify the deficiencies in teaching and to ensure that the achievement of the Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils is improved.

The school has made good progress in developing the roles of subject leaders through involving staff in different training programmes. The headteacher

ensures that all staff are fully involved in developing their skills of monitoring and critically evaluating the school's work. As a result, subject leaders and all staff now have a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses and what needs to happen to ensure further improvement. The way is led very effectively by the English and mathematics subject leaders who are particularly effective in supporting colleagues with implementing new initiatives to raise achievement.

Governors have also made good progress in developing their roles since the last inspection. They have a clear overview and are knowledgeable about the school's overall performance. As well as fully involving themselves in training, with the headteacher's guidance, they have set in motion systems to help them develop their ability to continually and carefully monitor the work of the school.

The school has received good support from the local authority. A close working partnership is established with the school, with the necessary support, advice and challenge being readily available to help the school move forward. The local authority closely monitors the progress being made by the school and has provided staff and governor training that has had a good impact on aiding improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin
Additional Inspector