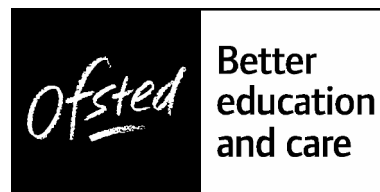


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Mrs K Spencer
St Michael's Church of England Junior School
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02 February 2007

Dear Mrs Spencer

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, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

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 June 2006, the school was asked to improve:

- the use of assessment information to provide pupils with more challenging tasks
- procedures for tracking pupils' progress to identify underachievement
- the monitoring by senior managers and subject leaders of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

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.

I observed the work of the school, had discussions with senior leaders and a representative from the local authority, and talked with the student council. A sample of pupils' work was scrutinised. The school's records of lesson observations and analysis of pupils' achievement were also scrutinised. A joint lesson observation was undertaken with the headteacher.

The school is now monitoring the quality of teaching regularly and effectively. The headteacher has a good understanding of how to judge the quality of

teaching. The Advanced Skills Teacher has been employed flexibly to improve learning in Years 3 and 4. As a result of these actions unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated; but only about 20% is good or better. This is below the school's ambitious target of 60% by the time of this monitoring visit. The school accepts that there needs to be more good teaching to ensure that pupils make better progress. Teaching observed during the visit also indicates that there is more to be done to ensure that pupils consistently receive an appropriate level of challenge.

The school is using better systems to track the progress of pupils more regularly, but inconsistencies remain. The recently appointed Associate Deputy Headteacher has put into place effective systems in numeracy that allow the school to identify underachievement and accelerate progress for pupils. The 2006 Year 6 test results show improved progress in numeracy. Work to monitor literacy, where progress in writing is still weak, is underdeveloped. The school accepts that it needs to track pupils' progress more rigorously and analyse this information more regularly.

There is clear evidence that when the school provides intensive support for pupils and holds teachers clearly to account, good progress is made. Pupils recognise this and clearly state that teaching in numeracy has improved, but that literacy still requires further improvements. When progress is achieved it is hard to sustain; partly because of an unusually high number of staffing difficulties which take up a considerable amount of the headteacher's time. However, there are indications that staffing is now becoming more stable.

The local authority has provided good support for the school; both to senior managers in dealing with strategic issues and also to teachers on improving aspects of their practice. It has also committed to funding the Associate Deputy Headteacher's post until the end of the current academic year. This will be important to ensure that the school has the capacity to accelerate progress in the areas for improvement before the next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Lynes

Her Majesty's Inspector