

Tribal Education
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 1236001
F 0845 1236002

Ofsted helpline
08456 404045
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk



Mrs H Hutchison
The Headteacher
St Paul's Church of England Primary School
New Street
Gloucester
GL1 5BD

12 March 2007

Dear Mrs Hutchison

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ST PAUL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school with Barbara Crane and Garth Mutton, Additional Inspectors, on 27 and 28 February 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2006.

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.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, looked at a range of pupils' work, and held discussions with the headteacher, a group of pupils, two governors including the chair, various members of staff, and a senior officer from the local authority (LA).

Context

The headteacher took up her permanent post two weeks before the school became subject to special measures. There have been substantial changes to the teaching staff team since the inspection in September 2006. Three teachers in school at the time of the inspection were not present during this monitoring visit, and four of the teachers now present were not in school at the time of the previous inspection. Two of these have been seconded from local schools for an indefinite period.

Achievement and standards

Current data and pupils' work show that pupils' achievement and standards are still inadequate. The school has introduced several strategies designed to improve aspects of teaching in order to meet pupils' different needs. Although these have not yet had a direct impact on raising standards they represent significant steps towards achieving this goal. Children's attainment on entry is well below national expectations. Most children make satisfactory progress in the Reception year, although those who are learning English as an additional language struggle at times due to inadequate support. Standards in Year 2 remain below the national average, but pupils this year are on track to achieve targets a little higher than those attained in Year 2 last year as a result of some good teaching and raised expectations. However, these pupils are starting from a much lower point than they should because their progress in Year 1 was inadequate. This inadequate progress is still evident in Year 1.

Standards in Year 6 remain exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science. The school's much improved collation and analysis of data shows a clear picture of widespread underachievement and the legacy of previous underachievement by pupils currently in Years 5 and 6. Many of the lower attaining pupils, those who are learning English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties, make particularly slow progress because work is often not adapted to meet their needs. The targets for the current Year 6 pupils appear low in terms of national expectations but are challenging for these pupils given their very low starting point at the beginning of the year. The higher targets set for the end of Year 6 in 2008 are based on recently established accurate performance data and reflect the higher expectations being promoted by the headteacher.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- ensure that work consistently meets the needs of all pupils, in order to raise achievement in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Years 3 to 6 – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, continue to be satisfactory. Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils say that behaviour has further improved since the inspection and so they enjoy school more. Older pupils who are trained to be peer mediators on the playground take their responsibilities seriously and their efforts are appreciated by others. Attendance has improved because of the effective steps taken to raise parents' and carers' awareness of the need for their children to attend school regularly. Pupils demonstrate that they know how to eat healthily and keep fit. They enjoy the healthy eating options

at lunchtime and take part in extra activities in sport. This is reflected in the recent confirmation of the Healthy Schools Award.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- develop attendance procedures so that all parents and carers become more aware of the importance of attending school regularly – satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Clear expectations about the quality of teaching have been established by the headteacher and these are contributing to satisfactory improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The proportion of good lessons has increased and the proportion of inadequate teaching has diminished. Teaching is often satisfactory. However, overall teaching remains inadequate because too many pupils are not learning enough in lessons and over time. The strengths in teaching identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Teachers' good management of pupils' behaviour promotes an effective learning atmosphere in almost all lessons. Teachers are beginning to explain more clearly to pupils what it is they are learning. The introduction of regular pupil progress meetings between the headteacher and each class teacher is helping teachers to focus more on their pupils' learning and to consider ways of improving planning. These meetings are also encouraging teachers to think about how they can make better use of the much clearer data they have about their pupils' past performance and progress.

However, significant weaknesses remain in teaching. Too often activities are not carefully matched or adapted to the needs of specific groups of pupils, with work being either too easy or too hard, for example pupils not being able to read the task given. There is an over reliance in Year 6 on pupils filling in worksheets, especially in mathematics and science, so pupils are not given enough responsibility for setting out their own work independently. Pupils are not being involved sufficiently in assessing their own learning. A new marking policy has been introduced but is not yet consistently implemented and some pupils are unclear about what they need to do to improve.

The support within lessons for the increasing proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language, and pupils with learning difficulties, is insufficient. The particular needs of these pupils are not being met by teachers and teaching assistants. Too often they are doing the same work as other pupils or work that is inappropriate.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- improve the quality of teaching, in all year groups, apart from Year 2, so that all lessons are good and underachievement is eliminated – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, whilst raising staff morale, has also resolutely raised colleagues' awareness of the scale of weaknesses within the school related to pupils' poor progress and low standards and the teachers' shared responsibility in resolving these. She has established a number of clear expectations regarding the quality of teaching and learning and taken some decisive actions to strengthen the quality of teaching based on some effective and rigorous monitoring of lessons. There is a well structured school improvement plan which clearly identifies how the school intends to raise standards and improve teaching and learning. The headteacher has set clear priorities for the future and is beginning to involve colleagues more in taking on increased responsibilities for achieving these. The role and contribution of the deputy headteacher have been strengthened, particularly in relation to her work as assessment coordinator and in monitoring the work of colleagues. This has been supported effectively by external professionals as part of the LA support programme. Other senior leaders and subject leaders have made insufficient progress in developing their roles and do not yet have a clear view of performance across the school in their area of responsibility or what is expected of them as leaders for the current year.

The school now has improved systems for collating and presenting performance data to show the standards and achievement of individuals and groups of pupils. However, this data has not been used sufficiently to ensure teachers always set work directly related to their pupils' needs and levels of understanding. It has not been in place long enough to show the current progress of various groups, for example those pupils withdrawn for additional support.

Governors are gaining an improved awareness of their responsibilities. They have strengthened their committee structure, with the addition of a development committee, in order to improve the way they monitor the work of the school, and have embarked on a training programme. However, they do not have an agreed schedule or procedures for receiving all the information they need about the school. The statutory procedures for performance management have not been put in place.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- develop the expertise of the senior managers, the subject coordinators and governors to enable them to monitor the work of the school rigorously and deal more effectively with weaknesses – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has produced a detailed and comprehensive statement of intended action directly addressing the areas for development identified in the inspection report. Targets set in this statement complement those in the school's own improvement plan. The support is satisfactory. The action plan is carefully balanced to enable the school to maintain overall responsibility for its own improvement. The school's link adviser has a good knowledge of the school and provides effective support.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

At this stage newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Make more use of information from all assessments when matching activities to the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties are supported effectively in the classroom by teachers and their assistants.
- Ensure senior managers and subject leaders are clear about their precise leadership roles and their priorities for the current academic year.
- Implement the statutory procedures for performance management.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly
Additional Inspector