

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

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr T Ireson
The Headteacher
Drakes' Broughton St Barnabas CofE First and Middle School
Stonebow Road
Drakes Broughton
Persnore
Worcestershire
WR10 2AW

Dear Mr Ireson

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Drakes' Broughton St
Barnabas CofE First and Middle School

Introduction

Following my visit with Carol Parkinson and Mary Usher-Clark, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 13 and 14 June 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in January 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, and met with you, groups of pupils, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, senior management team, the science coordinator, the chair of governors, the chair of the governors' curriculum committee, and representatives from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes. One teacher has left the school, another teacher is absent on long term sick leave, one teacher is absent through illness, and one other teacher is on maternity leave. As a result, three teachers have been recruited on temporary contracts to cover the

absences. At the end of the summer term 2007 two teachers will be retiring. The assistant headteacher joined the school at the beginning of the summer term and governors have carried out a review of the school's staffing structure, with changes due to take effect from the end of June. This is expected to strengthen the school's middle management structure.

Achievement and standards

The rigorous and relentless focus on raising achievement continues to have a positive impact on improving pupils' standard of work. In nearly all year groups in Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 rates of progress are increasing. In reading and mathematics the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress and some do even better than this, making good progress. Achievement in writing is improving but remains unsatisfactory, as does pupils' overall progress in Year 3. The school has been particularly successful in eradicating underachievement. The proportion of pupils who are not making enough progress in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 has fallen significantly by 65% in reading, 49% in writing and 66% in mathematics. For the first time in three years the pupils about to join Year 5 in the middle school have almost reached the standard of work expected for their age. These are considerable achievements, although the school recognises that too many pupils are still not making enough progress. The preliminary results of the 2007 Key Stage 1 assessments show that nearly all pupils reached the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Girls continue to do better than boys. The boys' achievement in writing is declining and too low.

Personal development and well-being

The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes are satisfactory overall. In some year groups and around the school the pupils' behaviour is exemplary, although on this inspection there were too many occasions when the pupils did not behave well enough. For example, teachers did not check and correct the pupils' unsatisfactory attitudes in some lessons and in an assembly. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils are generally good.

Quality of provision

Improvements in teaching have been sustained. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from outstanding to inadequate and is satisfactory overall. The proportion of good and outstanding lessons has increased since the previous inspection and this continues to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. A small minority of the teaching is, however, still not good enough and this is reflected in the slower rates of progress made by some pupils in each key stage. Teaching in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 and in Year 7 is satisfactory, with four out of ten lessons judged good or outstanding. As a result of this improvement, more pupils are being challenged and standards are rising. There has been an increase in the proportion of

higher attaining pupils making above average rates of progress in reading and mathematics.

Good and outstanding teaching is shown where teachers use a range of strategies to help the pupils learn new skills and acquire new knowledge and the pupils' work is very closely matched to their different starting points and capabilities. In the best lessons teachers make sure that pupils work hard, know exactly what they need to do to improve, and provide interesting, creative and stimulating contexts for learning. Good humour and excellent relationships are used effectively to motivate and inspire the pupils to do their best. In the minority of lessons where the teaching is not good enough, pupils' behaviour is not managed well enough, expectations are too low, and teachers' subject knowledge is not secure.

Whilst the provision and outcomes in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, medium term and short term planning indicate that there is too little direct and in depth teaching of important basic skills. Children have a wide range of activities throughout the day after a brief introduction led by the teacher. The teacher observes the children as they work and asks questions according to their ability to find out what they have learned and understood. Observations and assessment are clearly and regularly recorded each half term and provide evidence of children's attainment and achievement. In class, for the greater part of the time, children learn through a range of curricular activities by working at their own rate rather than receiving regular and frequent modelling from the teacher to extend their skills and knowledge at a faster rate.

The quality of teachers' marking in writing, mathematics and science is satisfactory but too variable. Whilst some of the written marking is very helpful and shows pupils exactly what they need to do next to improve their work, this is not a consistent feature. In some books pupils' work is unmarked and in others, written comments are not easy to understand. Whilst pupils recognise the benefit of good marking, the teachers' comments are not always followed up or acted on. There are sound plans in place to review and improve the school's marking policy and its impact on raising standards, particularly in writing.

The use of individual pupil targets to raise achievement and standards is satisfactory. Curricular targets in reading, writing and mathematics are set for groups of pupils and progress towards achieving these is reviewed each term. Most pupils know their mathematics targets and said that they helped improve their learning. Pupils know their targets in writing but sometimes have difficulty understanding how to achieve them.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics and science in order to challenge all pupils effectively, particularly the most capable, and to raise standards – satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management, including the school's capacity to improve, is secured by the good leadership shown by you, the senior management team and the governors. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness are systematic and rigorous. There is a clear sense of educational direction and purpose. You and senior teachers are effectively checking the school's performance and the impact of actions. As headteacher your passion and drive to improve the quality of education for all pupils are impressive. You are ensuring a rigorous and successful focus on raising achievement and eradicating poor rates of progress, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The senior management team, including the recently appointed assistant headteacher, gives you good support and also has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Written feedback to teachers about their work is satisfactory and sometimes good. It is best when the focus for the next observation is clear and the impact of teaching on the pupils' progress is explicit.

The governing body, under the good leadership of the chair of governors, is carrying out its statutory duties effectively. Governors keep a very watchful eye on the school's progress through their regular monitoring visits and the work of various committees, such as the curriculum committee which oversees improvements to the curriculum and their impact on raising standards.

Subject leadership continues to be good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- improve leadership and management at all levels by implementing more rigorous procedures for evaluating the school's effectiveness in eradicating underachievement – good.

External support

The local authority (LA) continues to provide a good level of support and intervention. In a recent review of the quality of education, LA inspectors provided an accurate summary of provision and outcomes and challenged the school to further improve the quality of teaching. This is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching, leadership and management.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Raise achievement in writing and increase rates of progress in Year 3.
- Eradicate the small minority of unsatisfactory teaching and increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching.
- Ensure the pupils' work is marked regularly and that targets for improvement are consistently understood and acted on by the pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Watters
Her Majesty's Inspector